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TO

JOHN BERNARD BURKE, ESQ.,

OF THE INNER TEMPLE.

My dear Sir,

If there be one reason why I should regret the years I have passed in the lands described in the following pages, that reason assuredly is, that during my absence in the East, I was deprived of the pleasure of cultivating your friendship.

The cordial and sincere regard which subsists between our respective families, has now extended over a quarter of a century; and I have from early years learnt to watch with admiration your amiable character, and successful career.

To you, then, my dear Sir, by a natural im-

pulse, I had in prospective already inscribed my book, long ere it assumed a definite form; and you must now allow me to realize my wish, and accept, at the same time, my first dedication, and my lasting regard.

Your's, most truly and faithfully,

THE AUTHOR.

London, July 22, 1851.

PREFACE.

I HAD often for amusement taken notes of my lengthy wanderings in Syria, Palestine, and Asia Minor; and these, through a lapse of years, still increased, though I not unfrequently lost far more valuable portions of my baggage. When, however, a friend sought information regarding any of the routes I had taken, or the towns in which I had sojourned, an extract from my note-book furnished him an itinerary, at least more satisfactory than a map. Collected in another form, they are now given to the public, and I trust may prove useful to travellers of every class in the East; while the sketches introduced of Eastern society, with which

my long residence rendered me familiar, may, I hope, afford some entertainment to that larger circle of wanderers, who visit other lands only in books.

F. A. N.

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"EL SHERIF," or "Kudhis," are the orthodox names by which Jerusalem is known to the Christians, Mahomedans and Pagans of the Levant. It is approachable by four distinct routes to Europeans visiting the East. Such as make Egypt their starting point, reach the "Holy City" by way of Hebron or Gaza. Those coming from Syria, proceed by land *viâ* Damascus, or by the

sea coast, or take shipping from Beyrout direct to Jaffa. During the latter period of my travels and up to August, 1850, 'The Grand Turk' steamer plied from port to port along the Syrian coast, which greatly facilitated the last-mentioned route to those that wished to avoid a hot and tedious journey by land.

To wander and to wonder in the pathways of Jerusalem was to me the object of a long cherished desire: at length I was so far towards the envied attainment of my wishes, that I found myself in Gaza. I remained some months in that town, as a guest of Doctor Esperon, the medical officer in charge of the quarantine establishment, whom I had known intimately in Syria some years before.

Gaza, a large, but straggling town covering as much space as a city of twenty times its population, is situated within four miles of the extreme southern limits of the Turkish dominions. Its houses are strangely constructed, consisting of a confused mixture of ancient and of the rudest modern architecture: ruins of magnificent palaces dating from the times of the Caliphs, rudely patched up with mud and brambles to shelter their present uncouth tenants;

in the intervals appear the Bedouin's hut plastered with cow-dung, and the well-smoked tents of the Zingari or gypsy tribes. If the outward appearance of these dwellings be unprepossessing, their interior is repulsive beyond conception. The streets are irregular and filthy, and the mass of vegetable and impure matter collected in them, well adapted to breed pestilence in its most direful form. In perfect keeping with this is the appearance of the native Mussulmen themselves who form the great majority of the population—a poor impoverished race, sunk into the basest slothfulness, ill-fed, worse clad, and, possibly from the great scarcity of water, literally unacquainted with ablution; and even in those cases rendered indispensable by the injunctions of the Koran, such as washing the hands and feet before praying, and before and after meals, sand is substituted for water.

The surrounding country, though anything but fertile, yields abundant supplies of grain, the greater portion of which is either transported by camels to Jaffa, or shipped at Gaza itself, for Algiers and other ports of the Mediterranean. The whole of the grain produced, is the property of a few of the wealthier ayans or Turkish nobles; who after

laying by a sufficiency for their own household wants, sell the remainder of their crops to merchants, who warehouse some portion of it for the consumption of the town itself, and the rest is disposed of to speculators; but so indolent and impoverished is the greater mass of the population, that whole families of them exist entirely for eight months in the year upon the fruit of the prickly pear, which in Gaza attains a perfection unrivalled even in India. The Arabs call the prickly pear *saboor*, which also signifies *ballast* and the name is singularly applicable in this instance. Many a morning, strolling in the environs of Gaza, I have wondered to see the complacent air with which an Arab and his family, decidedly in distressed circumstances, would squat themselves under the shade of a prickly pear hedge—and each furnished with a stick having a crook at the end, set earnestly to work gathering the ripe fruit, and pealing them in such a scientific manner as could only be accomplished by long experience. They were in fact *ballasting* themselves for the day, and had evidently nothing better in expectation. During the winter months, these poor creatures subsist on marshmallows and many edible herbs

and grasses unknown even to cattle. These they boil down into a pulp, which being seasoned with pepper and salt, and perhaps an onion, they render palatable, and it answers the same end as the *saboor*. Owing to these facilities in supporting life by the spontaneous produce of the soil, I never saw a man begging. The mildness of the winter also in a great measure accounts for this, they have no fear of frost before their eyes, no bitter biting cold to dispirit them, no forethought for those two indispensable requisites in colder climes, fuel and clothing.

Were Gaza built in a more compact manner, were its streets even as clean as those of Beyrout or Damascus (neither of which are very creditable on this score), such is the nature of its position, so pure the breezes that are wafted over it from seaward during the summer months, so balmy the desert winds that blow during the winter, that there is little doubt it would become the healthiest settlement in Syria or Palestine, after Latachia and Antioch; indeed, in Palestine there is no town that could compete with it. Olive-trees are plentiful in the neighbourhood of Gaza, and olive-oil proportionably cheap. A small quantity of

cotton and sessame seed is also grown, but the staple article of trade is soap, which is exported in large quantities to Egypt. The population is estimated at about fifteen thousand souls, principally composed of runaway Egyptians and Copts. Daily caravans arrive at Gaza from Egypt, consisting of whole villages migrating from the grinding sway of the Viceroy to place themselves under the milder despotism of the Turks. The Greeks are about fifteen hundred in number, the Armenians are very few, and there are no Jews; a remarkable fact considering the proximity of Gaza to Jerusalem, and one which says little for the commerce of a town.

Gaza is the least fanatical town I ever visited in Turkey; they allowed me freely to enter the mosques even with my shoes on. One of these structures had been in by-gone days a Christian Church, and a cross hewn out of the centre of the cieling, which was exceedingly lofty, had baffled all the efforts of the Turks to erase it —a fact which drove a few of the more intolerant to the verge of insanity. The Turks and their Christian neighbours agree remarkably well; they seldom or never dispute, and the insults and injuries

generally heaped upon Christians by Moslems are rarely heard of here. The Mosques, the pretended site of the city-gates, the spot where Sampson drew destruction upon himself and his enemies, and even Delilah's grave are assiduously pointed out by the native guides of the town. But the bee which sipped sweetness from flowers to lay up its hoard in so unseemly a hive as the lion's carcase—the rose that gave its dew-distilled nectar to zephyrs that came to announce the dawn — these have long ceased to exist. The very lion has forsaken his haunt, and the fox burrows no more midst waving corn-fields.

I saw two things at Gaza that made me wonder exceedingly. One was a camel eating prickly pear-leaves, biting off and crunching, as though they were cucumbers, direful-looking leaves a foot long and two inches thick covered with thorns as big as spike-nails; the other was the incredibly large flight of doves that came across the sea about the latter end of August. Quails I had often seen in flights, but doves never. These birds arrived in such an exhausted state, that they alighted by thousands on the beach, and there fell an easy prey to the natives. Twenty sold for

ten paras (about a halfpenny). Men who had well nigh forgotten the taste of meat, fell to and had a feast of a fortnight's duration; and when this strange fall of flesh was over, they went back to grass again.

Among a people so morally and physically depraved as the inhabitants of Gaza, superstition of course held an all powerful sway. The very nature of the lives they led, the dark mysterious old places that immediately surrounded them, the croaking of ravens, hooting of owls, yelling of hyenas and jackals, and the other discordant sounds that interrupted the deep stillness of night in an Arabian town, served to impress them with awe and reverence towards the many traditionary ghost tales that were handed about from house to house. They thoroughly believed Gaza to be densely populated with ghouls and ogres, and the restless spirits of wretched mortals who had come to an untimely or unnatural end. The Doctor's house in particular, was celebrated for the multitude of goblins it was supposed to shelter. This house had been, in days of yore, the harem of a powerful and iniquitous old Turk, who had possessed as many wives and vassals during his wicked lifetime, as

might serve to colonize and populate a modern Australia. Very beautiful houris danced before him in bangles and anklets of gold, with a small treasury of coins suspended from their tresses, and even the duennas looked hideously grand in their courtly attire. These latter were alternately disposed of by many whimsical ways and means, and their vacancies supplied by other aspirants. Several of the victimised old ladies are said to have deeply lamented the want of some friendly stream, in which they might effectually have quenched their sighs and their sorrows; but, alas! no river is there within many a mile of Gaza. Water is a scarce article, and the despot thought that the wells would not be improved by the continued soaking of old women. True, there was the sea close at hand, and this had been tried, but the restless waves, like an evil conscience, were continually raking up unpleasant reflections, so that when the old Pasha rode along the beach of an evening, as he was wont, strange things came up to look at him; damp things! that made him quake exceedingly and relinquish this plan for ever. He had other and pleasanter means of relieving himself of encumbrances. Square miles

of burial places were at his command, and arsenic and other drugs easily procurable; so the duennas went out like the snuff of a candle, but speedily reappeared, as the tradition goes, in the congenial forms of night-hawks and owls. As for the houris, jealousy and the sword made short work of many of them, and these were transformed into doves and butterflies; a more desirable transmigration than that which the Chinese allot to poor poets, who after singing themselves into a state of starvation and death in the human form, are condemned to an eternal hopping to their own music, in the size and shape of a grasshopper.

But to return to the Doctor's antique residence: it was fast crumbling away to native earth. Six habitable rooms remained, and of these he was but too glad to get possession, till such time as the house he was building near the quarantine establishment should be completed. Strange dark rooms they were, with vaults underneath, that there was now no possibility of entering, and flights of steps, leading to all appearances into the bowels of the earth. The rooms were all vaulted, and smelt damp and earthy, and there was no door of communication between any two of

them. The cook in his kitchen had a small journey to perform to get into the neighbourhood of the dining-room; and though I never met a spectre on my way to my bed-room of a damp night, I had ample opportunities of being one myself, from exposure to humidity and unwholesome vapours. Fortunately, my visit was during the summer. In its pristine condition this palace had spread itself over nearly half a mile of ground. The whole of the central part had been demolished by an earthquake, and the extremities or wings alone remained, the one being occupied by the Doctor, the other by the Mutzellim, or governor of the town, and these two, though decidedly the best houses in Gaza, came in for an ample share of the nauseous exhalations.

The room allotted to me had a window that overlooked what was dignified by the appellation of "The Garden," which consisted of some fifty square yards of sandy ground, fenced in by an impenetrable prickly pear hedge, containing half a dozen fig and as many palm trees. On the branches of one of these, in the immediate vicinity of my window, were nightly perched a couple of discordant hoot owls, that used to blink and nod

and hoot at me in bed in a most appalling way. Often of a moonlight night, when the rioting of these birds, coupled with the stifling closeness of the atmosphere, had effectually driven sleep from my pillow, have I sat for hours at this window, and meditated on the dreary landscape before me. Heaps upon heaps of crumbling ruins were there, with desolate sand hills, thinly interspersed with stunted palms, thorn trees and branches, thistles and noxious weeds! All shrubs that flowered sweetly, all trees yielding luscious fruits—birds bright in plumage and rare in song—the brighter and richer gifts of nature were, alas! no longer extant. "Gaza shall be forsaken,"* was the direful denunciation of the Prophet Zachariah, and most fearfully has this prophecy been fulfilled.

The new Lazaretto and quarantine establishment at Gaza are eligibly situated on a plain, about three hours distant from the Egyptian frontiers, commanding an extensive view of the surrounding country and high roads, and sufficiently distant from the town to be free from its local miasma, without suffering inconveni-

* Zachariah, ii, 4.

ence in deriving the necessary articles of daily consumption from its bazaars. This vast edifice, constructed at great expense by the Turkish Government, was completed in April, 1850.

If the question of the expediency of quarantine being established against Egypt be admitted, then is this establishment to be considered the greatest boon that could possibly have been conferred upon European travellers; for however well provided with tents and all the necessaries, and many of the luxuries of life, still a tent is no screen in this climate to the piercing heat of a summer's sun, and certainly not proof against the violent storms of wind and rain that are here prevalent in the winter months. The apartments allotted to Europeans in the quarantine are so constructed as to be airy and wholesome in the summer, and warm and comfortable in winter. Great credit is due to Doctor Esperon, by whose plan, and under whose immediate direction, it was constructed. It is built in an oblong form, surrounded by walls thirty feet high. Parallel with, and some four yards separated from these walls, run the apartments allotted to strangers; the magazine for baggage, the armory, baths and incense rooms. These

again are railed off from the offices of the Director or Nazir, the Doctor, the clerks, guardians, and officer commanding the detachment of troops; besides which there is a parlatorio, a bazaar, and a kitchen.

There is but one entrance gate, which is of immense thickness, and this is guarded day and night by a soldier with a loaded musket. The whole of the interior is paved, and in the centre there is a well of very excellent water; but which, from its excessive depth, would be utterly useless were it not for a costly machine, brought from France, which has been erected over it, and by the aid of which two men can, in half an hour, fill a cistern sufficiently large to supply the wants of the numberless wayfarers, and the large body of men attached to and in the employment of the quarantine.

The charges made on the wealthier class of travellers are very trifling, and the term of their incarceration is five days, in which, however, is included the day of entry, and that on which they obtain pratique. Those in indigent circumstances are not only exempt from any charge, but they are even supported at the expense of Government, the

only return expected being that they should make themselves generally useful by drawing water, sweeping, &c.; and, considering the daily influx of Egyptian villagers who are flying from the Viceroy's territories, the haul upon the treasury purse strings must be very considerable indeed.

The Nazir or director of the quarantine, in September, 1850, was Achmet Effendi, a Turkish gentleman of very affable manners, who had been educated in Italy, spoke and wrote Italian fluently, was very accomplished, and, amongst other things, played admirably on the flute from note, a strange phenomenon to me, who had been accustomed to the ordinary run of pipe-smoking pompous Effendis of Syria. Both he and the Doctor complained sadly of the trouble and difficulty, occasioned by the greater mass of our countrymen visiting the East. Spanish grandees, Italian nobles, German barons, and Frenchmen, whose families had pedigrees more antediluvian than Noah, were wont to submit calmly to the rules and regulations of the establishment, and quitted it on an intimate footing of friendship with the authorities; but no sooner was the proximity of a caravan of Englishmen announced, than every one was thrown into a state of

excitement; and all the twenty soldiers, with their truculent lieutenant, were immediately drawn up in battle array. The two hundred guardians looked hot and fierce; ferocious-looking camel drivers were pressed into the service. The Nazir twirled his huge moustachios, and the Doctor, to be prepared for an emergency, had a table placed in the gateway, on which he made a diabolical display of surgical instruments.

After a great deal of excitement and impatience, a little cloud of dust proclaimed the arrival of these dreaded individuals. First, came a couple of guardians, with drawn swords and very hoarse voices, having been wrangling with the dragoman all the way from the outpost. Then one, or perhaps two, nondescript looking animals—in costumes hitherto unheard of—sinister faces, and moustachios nine inches from point to point. These were the dragomen or interpreters who always accompany 'milords' on their travels, speaking a little English, just sufficient to misunderstand what you say, and make themselves a little useful at times, in amends for which sacrifices they are exceedingly skilled in the art of fleecing or plucking, which their employers find out eventually

to their discomfort. After these hybridous individuals the milords themselves heave in sight, generally wearing large felt hats covered with calico, the whiteness of which contrasts admirably with their own highly inflamed countenances. Naturally of a rubicund complexion, exposure to the sun and desert sands, has shaded this into a deep vermillion, and once arrived opposite to the quarantine gates, a violent argument instantly ensues. The orator on these occasions is generally the dragoman, for the travellers are too weary and hot to take any active part. The first concession for which the fiery interpreter contends is, that they may be permitted to pitch their own tents in the vicinity of the quarantine, and be allowed to stroll as far as the beach (accompanied by guardians) for the sake of healthful recreation. This point is vainly combatted by the authorities, who "*show cause why*" such privileges should not be allowed them, viz., such as the wind accidentally blowing a bit of straw or a rag against some passenger, causing the said unhappy individual to be immediately arrested and incarcerated as impure. Finally, the camels on which the tents are laden are forcibly seized and dragged into the quarantine'

which act settles this question eternally; but there are others to be arranged, and these are combatted step by step, and inch by inch. The first set of guardians who are placed to guard the separate apartments of the strangers are forthwith kicked out of their rooms.

But the uproar that ensues when the travellers and their servants are disarmed, and their guns, pistols, and swords taken from them and lodged in the armory—this, I was told, beggars all description. The interpreters on such occasions became maniacs; they lie on the flat of their backs, and kick and bite like monkeys, till, overcome by numbers and their injured feelings, they go into fits, and come out of them again, the very points of their moustachios hanging down in despair, and they slink about like dogs in a strange street, 'effendeing' and cringing to every one they came across.

In some instances the unhappy travellers turned out to be very demure, quiet people, who, from their entire ignorance of every other language but the mother tongue, were forced tacitly to submit to the arrangements and rascalities of their dragomen. Mr. Noakes, a retired butcher, with

Messrs. Jones, Smith, Stokes, and Brown (who were something in the soap and tallow line) possibly formed this caravan; and not being conversant with French and Italian were subjected to every imaginable evil.

There were others, however, who were worse inside than they were outside of the walls of the quarantine. They played whist, and drank punch, and sang comic songs till five o'clock in the morning; and having bought some land tortoises on their journey, would spend half the day in making them race, betting to a large extent on the winner. One gentleman, of a musical turn, used to get out of bed and alarm the neighbourhood at one o'clock in the morning, by executing *morceaux* from the choicest operas on a key-bugle; while another, who had brought a chained monkey into quarantine with himself, let Pug at liberty during the night, who, hopping from room to room, placed half the establishment in quarantine, and would have compromised the whole town of Gaza, had not a timely bullet from the sentry's musket put an end to his mischievous career.

Such are a few of the many anecdotes related to me of English travellers. The local authorities

had vainly applied for the nomination of an English consular agent who might prove of incredible service in checking the insolent vagaries of the interpreters, and, indeed, prevent some serious mischief which must eventually arise if matters continue as they are; for I am persuaded that nothing will intimidate the quarantine authorities from acting up to the strict letter of their instructions, at least so long as this establishment is under the control of its present doctor and director.

The rides in the vicinity of the new Lazaretto are very agreeable, especially the one towards the sea and along the beach. It is a singular fact that vegetation seems to thrive better here in the immediate vicinity of the sea. There are half a dozen very decent fruit gardens, with orange and lemon trees and grapes in abundance; but the most striking phenomenon is that of a well of sweet water, which has been sunk on the beach itself, and over which in boisterous weather the surf remorselessly rolls, yet by some inconceivable process the water in the well remains as pure as ever, and hundreds of women flock here of an evening to get their jars filled for the next day's consumption.

The roadstead of Gaza is much exposed for shipping at all times of the year, and the surf on the shore, after a breeze of wind, continues for many days too violent to admit of boats. Of a fine calm day bathing in the sea is an agreeable pastime. I once ventured in, when the surf was rather rough, and got my temerity rewarded by having my hip dislocated, being unexpectedly caught by a huge wave which gave me a blow like a cart-horse's kick.

Sleeping in draughts during the summer is extremely dangerous, especially if you be fatigued and hot at the moment of dozing off. Such acts of carelessness expose one to a severe attack of "esquinoncy," perhaps the most excruciating malady to which frail mortals are subjected. I speak from experience; and the greatest misery of this disorder is, that at no period in after life are you entirely secure from a relapse.

Such is modern Gaza as visited by me in 1850! such the miserable, crumbling, deserted tenements—such the ruins of palaces and mansions which abounded once with every luxury—such the desolation that reigns around and in it, and such its wretched tenants—owls and beasts of prey! Yes!

the once famed stronghold of the Philistines has indeed fallen.* But that Gaza was a magnificent and wealthy city (putting aside all other authorities), its ruins and antiquities sufficiently prove. The question therefore, naturally arises, how is it that Gaza has not kept pace with other ancient cities, of equally renowned fame, in recovering and retaining some small portion of its greatness? Let us hope that it soon may, but hitherto the curse of prophecy hangs heavily over it. "I will send a fire on the walls of Gaza which shall devour the palaces thereof;"† and this prediction was at least partly fulfilled when Jonathan went up to Gaza and the "people of Gaza shut him out, wherefore he laid siege to it, and burned the suburbs thereof with fire."‡

* There were none of the Anakims left in the children of Israel, only in Gaza.

† Amos, i, 7.

‡ I. Maccabees, xi, 61—62.

CHAPTER II.

A Turkish entertainment—Moslem fanaticism—Dancing Dervishes—Caravans—Turkish coasters—Pilgrims to Mecca—Boshneck, the Arnout—Arab marauders—Nabal's retreat—Wilderness of Maon—Adventure in a cavern—Skirmish with Arabs—David's hiding-place.

BEFORE leaving Gaza, I witnessed the celebration of the feast of the "Beiram;" which, owing to the great sufferings the abstemious Turks had been undergoing during their long and tedious fast, which had this time fallen at the very hottest season of the year, was celebrated with more than ordinary festivities. The Nazir of the quarantine entertained us at a banquet he gave to the local authorities. The amusements of the day commenced with wrestling, which was kept up by the

soldiers of the infantry detachment stationed at the Lazaretto. Some of these were the most uncouth looking beings I ever set eyes on, but they were possessed of great muscular strength and surprising agility, so much so that I imagine they might well nigh prove a match for the far-famed "Pilewans," of India. Horse and foot races followed, and then dinner was served on a most gigantic scale—whole sheep stuffed with rice, raisins, almonds, and innumerable spices—ducks stewed with olives, salads dressed with curdled milk, and highly flavoured with garlic; "buckalowa," and other Turkish sweetmeats; and last, though by no means least, a monster pillauff, that made two men stagger under its weight. French wines and liqueurs were freely circulated amongst such of the party, as thought fit to dispense with the injunctions of the Koran on this score. A band of Arab musicians kept up an incessant nasal drone, and executed, amongst other popular airs, a Turkish version, of "Malbrooke," a tune now universally known in the East.

After this fatiguing performance I was rather startled to see three or four ferocious looking Dervishes enter the room, armed with formidable

looking spikes and swords, their long matted hair streaming down their backs—long grisly beards, and such eyes—eyes that would do credit to the most malignant lunatic. The doctor and myself thought it best to withdraw, as a religious ceremony was now about to be performed, and there was no telling to what extent their zeal and fanaticism might carry them, as they would think the act of impaling a Christian, or playfully thrusting him through with a spear, highly commendable, if not an imperative duty. From the doctor's apartment we could see all that was going on without being inconveniently near. One dervish danced with a drawn sword in his hand, while the three others chaunted some unintelligible stuff, to which they kept time by nodding their heads like Chinese Mandarins. As the dirge grew more animated, so did the movements of the dancing dervishes, till the shouting of the vocalists, and the frenzy of these holy fanatics reached such a pitch of excitement, that they at length lost all command over their voices, and took to foaming and spitting at each other like belligerent cats over a fish's head. All sounds now gradually died away, and the whole party were stretched full

length on the floor in a state of utter exhaustion. Large glasses of rose water were sprinkled over them by the assembled Moslems, and they finally took themselves off, laden with the donations of the pious fanatics who had witnessed their performance.

This entertainment must have cost our host a good round sum, but it is a festival that comes but once a year; and besides his salary, which is a very decent one, the benefits resulting from the monopoly of the duty on salt, exported into Palestine from El Arish and the Egyptian territories, are divided between himself and the doctor, they having purchased the monopoly from the Government. Many thousand camels laden with salt pass annually by Gaza during the summer and autumn months. All caravans, whether consisting of mules, horses or camels, are compelled to perform their quarantine close to the sea-shore, where they bivouac as best they may, and under the eagle eye of a host of guardians broil out their time on the scorching hot sand, meagrely shaded at intervals of the day by the scanty foliage of a few scattered palm-trees. I believe the holding ground for shipping to be good and

secure, in the roads of Gaza, during July, August and September, but even then they should be prepared to slip at a moment's warning, as this place, like all the ports on the coast of Palestine and Syria, is occasionally subjected to sudden and violent gales of winds in summer, which give but little warning of their proximity, and commit sad havoc amongst the shipping. The *reises*, or masters, of the small Arab trading vessels and boats on the coast are well acquainted with every varying sign of a change of weather, and hold their anchorage, or launch out into the deep accordingly; but even they are sometimes deceived, as occurred at Jaffa in November, 1850, when a sudden gale of wind wrecked three vessels and every Greek and native craft in the harbour.

The annual pilgrimage of devotees to Mecca are furnished by the villages and towns through which they pass with provisions and fodder for man and beast. This voluntary contribution falls rather heavily upon Gaza, Jerusalem, and Hebron, as, after leaving these towns, the 'hadji,' or pilgrims, do not fall in with any cultivated grounds or inhabited towns or villages for many a day's journey; hence the supply of necessaries is greater than that which is

exacted in other parts of Palestine and Syria. A monstrous caravan left Gaza this year (1850) at the usual season, to meet the "hadji" at an appointed rendezvous, which was fixed at Kalid il Haror, a deserted and ruined village at the foot of the district called by the Arabs, Maon, and possibly the identical place to which Nabal* used to retreat with his flocks and herds during the winter. Maon being a very mountainous district, just bordering on the desert, and possessing one or two luxuriant springs of fresh water, was infested at all seasons of the year by a desperate band of Arab marauders, whose fleet coursers were as well suited for flight across the desert sands, as they were practised and expert in clambering up the almost perpendicular sides of these mountain ranges, which apparently only offered a footing fitted for conies and wild goats to risk their necks upon. It became highly necessary, therefore, that an escort sufficiently strong to instil terror into these mountain marauders, and protect the stores destined for the holy pilgrims from falling into their unconscionable clutches, should accompany the caravan to the

* I. Samuel, xxv, 1.

appointed station. This hazardous service fell to the lot of the troop of Arnout cavalry, stationed at Gaza; their commander, nicknamed Boshneck, or the proud, had on several occasions distinguished himself in engagements with these wild, lawless tribes, and his very name spread confusion amongst their ranks. He was a fine specimen of a brave soldier, this Boshneck, and what is rarely met with amongst his class of warriors, he mingled humanity with courage, had as much pity as a kind mother, and as much fiery courage as a lion. He carried ample proofs of this latter trait about with him on his person, which was literally tattooed with sabre cuts and thrusts, his legs and arms reminding one forcibly of an old desk at a public school, on which successive generations had hacked and hewed strange hieroglyphics, meant to represent birds and bipeds, a lasting memento of the brighter flashes of their earlier imaginations. The doctor and myself gladly accepted the invitation given us by Boshneck, to accompany him to this interesting though dangerous region; and the better to facilitate our journey, and secure us from the annoyances our European costumes might subject us to, both from the pilgrims themselves, as

also from the desert tribes, we adopted the dress of the Arnout, and were so well and completely disguised, that with this and our knowledge of the language and manners of the people, we journeyed onwards unsuspected and unobserved.

From the great heat of the weather at this season, it was found expedient to travel by night; our progress was slow and tedious in the extreme, owing to the measured paces of the camels and other heavily laden beasts of burthen that our troop was escorting; besides which, every half-hour there was an uproar in the camp, owing to some fractious mule having kicked off his load; now a camel had stranded in some quicksand, and required the united efforts of the multitude to get it on its legs again; and now the moon set, and left us in total darkness, when a general halt was called till daylight, and fires lit to guide stragglers who, with the usual Oriental apathy, were lingering till the darkness would suddenly awake them to a sense of their danger, and the risk they incurred of falling into the clutches of the prowling Arabs. Parties of stragglers kept arriving throughout the night, so that with the riot they made in unloading their animals, and the scuffles that ensued between them

and the soldiers, sleep was quite out of the question.

This kind of work continued for about five consecutive days' march. At length, one bright moonlight evening, we entered the passes of the mountains of "Maon." The scene was magnificent: perpendicular rocks seemed as if they had been split asunder by some tremendous commotion or rude convulsion of the earth, while the hand of man, Heaven only knows how many centuries gone by, had carved out gigantic arches and caverns, which led from one to the other in regular succession, till you came to tunnels, through which not one ray of daylight had ever penetrated, and whose original use remains a mystery to this day. Benches and seats, rudely carved out of the rock, were plentifully scattered about, and the slightest whisper found its echo in a hundred different vaults. There we bivouaced for the night. A stream of limpid water flowed by the mouth of the entrance, and the existence of these springs and streamlets, at a time of the year when water was so scarce in the neighbourhood, contributed greatly to this being a favourite haunt of the desert tribes. At the time of our approach, a party of Arabs were

watering their horses at this wild and chosen spot, but their spies gave them timely warning, and they disappeared, as if by magic, in different directions, and by pathways familiar only to themselves. Men on horseback looking like pigmies were presently seen by us scampering over the ledges of the surrounding hills, though occasionally an inquisitive face would be suddenly protruded over the rock just opposite, and as speedily disappear again. To remedy this state of affairs, when one could hardly guess the direction a bullet might find its way to us, Boshneck placed sentries of chosen men on the most elevated points immediately above us, and unhappy muleteers and camel-drivers were pressed into this most unpleasant service. They were ordered to hail each other at intervals of every ten minutes, and the alacrity they displayed in obeying this part of the order was highly commendable. There was no fear of any of them sleeping at their post; so whilst they were engaged in this unpleasant out-post duty, we enjoyed in quiet the luxuries of a Turkish pillauf, succeeded by pipes and coffee.

Some of us made up a party to endeavour to penetrate as far as we could into one of the many-

vaulted tunnels. Boshneck, who had partaken pretty freely of the grape juice, undertook to lead the van. We all kept on our huge boots for fear of serpents, and a massive torch having been prepared, our expedition started, bent upon discovery. We talked of gold and jewels which might be secreted somewhere. Nothing but a damp, dripping cavern was as yet to be seen; yet we had progressed a pretty good distance—perhaps eight or ten minutes walking—when suddenly a huge bat flapped her wings violently and extinguished our light in an instant. All was now confusion, every one turning round instantly and attempting flight. Such falling about in the dark, and treading upon each other's heels—such mingled curses and bursts of laughter—such a mixed scene of anger, fear, and mirth was never before witnessed. We were compelled, from the many stunning knocks received from various projecting stones, to slacken our speed till it got to a snail's pace, and, by dint of feeling one's way, and occasionally crawling on all fours in the damp cavern, we at length arrived safely at its mouth. I asked Boshneck how it was that such a valiant man as he was, should have been the first to run in our dilemma. He

replied, laughingly, that he cared not for men any hour of the night or day, but that he lacked courage to combat Shitan (the devil) on his own ground.

At daybreak next morning a strong armed party from the hadji arrived with their own camels and mules, to transfer the loads from those we had escorted, and the moment this operation was completed, we started on our way homewards, as the report was current that numberless tribes were gathering in the vicinity, intent upon attacking Boshneck, to whom they owed many a grudge. We had hardly mounted ere random shots were fired at us. The distance, however, protected us from any serious results; the camel-drivers mounted their camels, the muleteers their mules; all carried light weights, and we returned at a speed very different from that at which we had come.

For the first few hours, the Arabs annoyed us exceedingly, and balls came humming unpleasantly near; but the soldiers, who formed our rear-guard, bore all the brunt of this, and returned the enemy's fire with interest. As soon as we got fairly into the plain all this skirmishing ceased,

and the next day at mid-day we were safe at Gaza.

"And David and his men were in the wilderness of Maon: Saul also and his men went to seek him, and they told David: wherefore he came down into a rock, and abode in the wilderness of Maon."* Doubtless, one of the very caverns I had just visited had given this shelter to David in his troubles.

* I. Samuel, xxiii, 24—25.

CHAPTER III.

Turkish pic-nics — Harem recreations — Anecdotes of a Greek lady—Excursion round the coast—Sea-side caves —Goatherds—Mirage—The ruins of Askalon.

ALL Orientals, especially women, have an innate delight in pic-nic parties, and rural pleasure excursions. Spring is hailed with the utmost glee, and, during the fine season, feast days and holidays are invariably celebrated in the open air; even in Gaza, where, Heaven knows, there is not much of the picturesque to tempt one abroad on a broiling day, large parties of women may be seen issuing from the town, some mounted on donkeys, others on foot, all wending their way to the sea-shore, here to enjoy their frugal mid-day repast of bread, fruits, and curdled milk—to bathe in the sea—to

hear and recount tales, and fritter away the long sultry hours under the friendly shade of a ruined wall or some desolate fig-tree.

Amongst the harems of the great men of the place, such as the Governor, the Cadi, the Mufti, &c., are Turkish ladies, born and bred at Constantinople; and these beauties of the Bosphorus, thus placed in temporary exile, and deprived of all the attractive amusements of a Stambouline existence—the daily visits to tinselled and highly aromatic bazaars—the intercourse with other harems, that spur to rivalry in costly silk robes and Cashmere shawls, bewail hourly their sad doom, and endeavour in some measure to atone for the want of amusement and gaiety by inviting each other on pleasure excursions to the gardens of their several lords and masters. On these occasions every endeavour is made to outvie each other in the splendour of their establishments. But, alas for them! and luckily for their husbands, the resources of the place are so very limited, the shops so poorly furnished in costly luxuries, that, beyond a few Damascus preserves (which are justly renowned in the East), some melons, water-melons, and fine pomegranates and figs, procured from

Jaffa, they have but few special delicacies to set before their friends. Whole battalions of chickens are slaughtered and cooked in every imaginable shape and method. Baskets of cucumbers are sliced up with onions, and mint, and garlic; the whole of which is formed into a huge salad, by being mixed up with curdled cream; and, as for pillauf, *ça va sans dire?*

After partaking largely of all these dainty dishes—for Oriental ladies seldom lack appetite, the remnants, still very plentiful, are handed over to the servants and numerous retinue, who generally consist of the poorer class of Gazaite women, beings unaccustomed to such luxuries; consequently the onslaught made by them is so terrific, that the few meagre dogs which have been looking on in hungry expectation during the whole process of mastication, eventually slink away with the cleanly-picked thigh bones of a few sickly chickens. The meal being over, the whole party, in a very merry mood, betake themselves to the numberless swings which are invariably to be found in gardens frequented by harems. The whole place resounds with their pretty little voices. I say pretty voices, for the

melodies they chaunt are intolerable when sung by a man, and the breezes waft far and wide their merry notes. But, alas, the same breezes come laden with a sickly smell of garlic, and so the romance ceases! All through the Levant garlic is a favourite condiment, and particularly used by Greeks and Armenians during their fasts. And, as for the Jews, the quantity they consume is incredible; their savoury meat cooked with sessame seed, and olive oil and garlic *ad libitum*, renders their proximity at all times disagreeable.

A Greek lady, the wife of a custom-house officer at Gaza, who used frequently to visit the doctor's wife, was a native of Antioch, and, like all Levantines, enthusiastic in her praises of her native town. On being informed that I had been some time a resident there, she at once launched forth into dire lamentations. "When shall I see that blessed country again?" said she. "Where is there a river like the Azi? (Orontes.) Where such gardens—such fruit—such water-melons? and what place in the world can furnish such eels?" Certainly the height of Oriental ambition is but small; let them have gardens to saunter

about in, good water to drink, coarse bread and onions, cucumbers and garlic, melons, dried figs, and grapes, with tobacco to smoke, and they envy no one the enjoyment of all the luxuries of life; take them to a country where these things are hard to be procured, and they would pine and be dissatisfied, and even die broken-hearted. "We remember the fish which we did eat in Egypt freely, the cucumbers and the melons, and the leeks and the onions, and the garlic."* Such was the murmuring of the Israelites against Moses, when he led them through the wilderness, towards this very "Land of Promise." Thousands of years are now past, and such at this very day would be the cry of both the Gentiles and Jews of the East.

We made a pleasure excursion towards Askalon one fine morning, intending to remain amongst the ruins a couple of days or more. The road lay along the sea-side, and so long as clouds obscured the sun, and protected us from its overpowering heat, the jaunt was pleasant enough.

This is the nearest road to Jaffa from Gaza, and the best in summer; but in the winter months

* Numbers, xi, 5.

many parts of it are impracticable, owing to the encroachment of the sea. The surf then dashes violently into the huge caverns worked out of the endless sand-hills that line this coast. These caverns were tenanted, when we passed, by goat-herds and their flocks. Thither they resort for shelter from the fierce heat of the noontide sun; and here during the night the goats are penned, securely guarded by monstrous dogs, that howl and bark throughout the live-long night. There are wells and reservoirs in this vicinity which furnish water for the flocks the whole year round, and the brambles and thorn bushes that flourish near the sea-side form their pasturage.

The goatherds, or shepherds, are a forlorn class of boys, much stinted both in means and growth (the latter possibly the result of the former), and fanatically addicted to squealing pipes—the music of which being the antithesis to that of the famed Tityrus, instead of charming the woods, seems to have had the effect of frightening vegetation out of its very existence. All such as possess goats in Gaza entrust them to the care of these pastoral youths, who undertake the entire charge of them for the rather small consideration of about forty

paras (two pence sterling), payable quarterly by each individual proprietor. Some boys have the care of goats belonging to twenty different individuals. Eight months in the year they occupy these caverns—the other four they remain in the immediate vicinity of Gaza. They live entirely upon coarse flour cakes, goat's milk and a few wild fruits; and woe betide them if only an old goat should get obstinate and die whilst under their charge; divers cuffs on the head are sure to await them on their return, to say nothing of the stoppage of their infinitessimal wages. To prevent such calamities, an understanding is come to amongst themselves; the moment a goat is reported to be on the sick list, the troop to which it belongs is entrusted to the charge of a brother Tityrian, and the invalid in question is quickly shouldered and carried off to the house of its proprietor. Once arrived, it is at liberty to expire at its earliest leisure, as no odium can then be attached to the hapless shepherd, who otherwise is instantly accused of having slaughtered the creature with malice aforethought, with the wicked intent and purpose of feasting thereon at another's expense.

Europeans I presume rarely come this way, for each successive cavern that we passed, the boys ceased piping and came out to stare at me with as much amazement depicted in their faces as one might fancy would be seen in that of any old lady, who should happen to find a hyena in her bed when on the point of turning in at night. The savage shaggy dogs annoyed us a great deal by rushing out upon and startling the horses.

The sea-shore was exceedingly rocky, a ship or boat would meet with a sorry fate in a gale on such a coast.

Before arriving at Askalon, the pleasantly fantastic mirage formed at early dawn ere the gloomy haze of the morning was entirely dispersed, and the scorching rays of the sun beat down upon our not sufficiently protected heads for upwards of an hour. This in addition to the dreadful glare of the sand-hills and the sea, gave myself and the Nazir "Achmet Effendi," violent head-aches. We alighted amongst the ruins of Askalon towards evening, more dead than alive, and went supperless and pipeless to bed. Nevertheless, about midnight we both awoke much refreshed, and free from all pain. The moon was shining brilliantly on the

desolation around; not a breath stirred the drooping leaves of the palm-trees, not a sound broke the stillness of the night, save the heavy breathing of the deep slumbering guides that were stretched around us. Even the ocean seemed wrapt in peaceful sleep, and the ripple that broke upon the beach was gentle and noiseless. A fit hour, a fit season, to look upon the wreck that was fast crumbling to earth again. Men in their health and strength, and with merry hearts, had here laboured away the best hours of their manhood, laying stone upon stone of some stately edifice; many returned to dust before its completion, but they died with the thought that their children should live on to behold and share in the realization of their life's dream. The city was completed: it stood fast flourishing for years. 'Twas populous, 'twas rich, 'twas thinned by pestilence, by famine, by war. Time stole on as ever—the same sun that shone brightly upon it in the days of its splendour, shone as brightly at the last hour of its glory. Its children are thick mingled with the dust that is around; so are its halls and its palaces, its dome and its porticos. Its ruins remain yet to point out the

spot of its bygone renown; and when these are gone the same sun may still shine brightly on the straw-hatted antiquaries who may in future generations be digging to discover its hidden foundations. We crept about the place till within an hour of day-break. Passing a whole day in such a deserted melancholy spot would have been too much for our enfeebled nerves; we had seen all we could see, and decided to leave all further meditations among the ruins of Askalon to that many-headed specimen of nature called travellers, and with a keen remembrance of our sufferings of the previous day, we thought it wisest to start at once on our return.

Coffee was soon made and partaken of, and we were speedily cantering along the beach. The goats issuing from their caverns were at this early hour already mustering opposite their respective folds; bleating loudly for their missing young and for their breakfasts. Half-naked shepherd boys were shouting and screaming to their respective flocks, whilst their huge dogs were bounding to and fro, and were too much occupied in leading back the straying kids by their ears to take any notice of our near approach. The whole

beach for hours was literally swarming with goats. "Askalon shall be a desolation, and the sea-coast shall be a dwelling for shepherds and folds for flocks."* And so it certainly is! Myriads of larks sang their matins, and turtle-doves cooed on the olive branches, as we again neared Gaza—where we arrived ere the delightful coolness of the sea-breeze had ceased, or the sun's rays had waxed uncomfortably warm.

* Zephaniah, ii, 4—6

CHAPTER IV.

The forbidden delicacy—Perilous adventure of a gourmand—The sanitary cordon—A fracas—Hebron—Tomb of Abraham and Sarah—Touching devotion of Jewish pilgrims—Ramlah—A sporting exploit—Monastic luxury—A jovial friar—Story of a baronet—A funeral and a wedding.

I HAD scarce recovered from the fatigues of the jaunt to Askalon, ere news arrived of a civil feud having arisen amongst the authorities connected with the quarantine establishment at Hebron, which as well as that of Jerusalem, is under the jurisdiction of the doctor and Turkish superintendent of Gaza.

The medical officer at Hebron, it would appear, was fond of pork, and occasionally went out wild-boar shooting; domestic pigs are of course

unknown. On this occasion he was negligent in concealing from his chief, a fanatical Turk, a goodly sized leg of roasted boar, which was placed on the table in his office at the quarantine. The row that ensued could hardly be imagined. Violent abuse led to blows, and the doctor, the only European in the place, finding himself in a dangerous minority, was forced to barricade his windows and doors, and promenade the room with a loaded pistol in either hand, till his servant, whom he had dispatched post haste to Gaza, should bring some Christian succour.

On receipt of this intelligence, my friends, the doctor and the Nazir of Gaza, determined upon proceeding to Hebron forthwith, and having nothing better to do, I accompanied them. We started at eight in the evening. Our road lay along the Sanitary Cordon, which extends from "Khan Yunus," a small village, two hours distant from Gaza, to Hebron itself. This cordon, which it requires twelve hours fair riding to traverse, is lined with mounted guardians of the quarantine, who have stations at every half hour interval, each station containing four men, two of whom are on duty alternately. These mounted

guards ride from their own station to the next and back again, perpetually, day and night, being relieved on duty every six hours. Not a cat could pass the cordon without detection, for their system of mounting guard is so well arranged, that whilst those of one station are on their way to another, the guards of the station which they are approaching have crossed them somewhere about midway, going in an opposite direction.

We travelled on leisurely by moonlight, stopping as inclination led us, at any of the numerous stations for a few minutes' repose, a pipe, and a cup of coffee. About two A.M. our party began to feel drowsy, and as we were intent on enjoying the trip, and on not making toil of a pleasure, we halted. Carpets were spread and covered with Turkish coverlids, and with our saddles for bolsters, we were not long in finding the rest we sought. At six next morning we awoke, much refreshed by our four hours' uninterrupted rest. Our appetites were keen, and provisions plentiful: so having made a hearty breakfast on cold fowls, and salad, eggs, boiled and fried, tea, coffee, fruits, &c., we were again in our saddles.

We had not been long mounted, ere we per-

ceived a great commotion amongst the guards at the station we were approaching. They had discerned a caravan of travellers, and were in a high state of excitement. We dismounted to await their arrival, and after a few minutes their vicinity was announced by the loud voices of disputants. The travellers consisted of two harmless Americans, of very peaceful demeanour, who seemed rather alarmed at the clamorous accents and violent gestures of their dragoman. This latter individual was, however, very soon silenced, on my representing to his masters the very improper language he was making use of, and the unpleasant risks they incurred in consequence. They dismissed their zealous interpreter on the spot, and he was handed over to the guards, to be treated in every respect as an unprotected ryah, or subject of the Sultan. The travellers proceeded very peacefully towards Gaza, the doctor having ordered the guardians to instruct his own cook and servants to attend to their wishes and wants during our absence.

Nothing again occurred to interrupt the progress of our journey, and we reached the Lazaretto at Hebron exactly at a quarter before noon.

The besieged doctor came forth from his fortified retreat to receive us, and we went together into the Director's Office, and found that indignant individual seated in a corner of his divan, buried in a large fur pelisse, and in a decided state of intoxication. He glared hazily at us through his half-closed eyelids, and greeted us with the epithets of "Gour day," &c. On the Nazir of Gaza commencing to rate him soundly in Turkish, for his gross misconduct, he very coolly and very unexpectedly caught him, his really worthy co-religionist, a rap over the nose with his pipe-stick. The two doctors made a rush to the rescue. As for myself, I am ashamed to say, that I was so overcome with mirth at this unusual incident, that it was with the utmost difficulty I could refrain from laughing aloud. The noise of many voices ensued; guards were called, handcuffs produced; and the last I saw of the pugnacious director was when he left Hebron, that very evening, for Beyrout, a hand-cuffed delinquent, under a strong escort; and so the existing differences were brought to an unexpected close.

The doctor of Hebron, however, got a good rating for his indiscretion, in respect of the roast

leg of pork; and, leaving my companions to settle other minor matters of discipline, I strolled forth at the cool of evening, accompanied by a guide, to see what relics still remained of the ancient Kirjath-Arba.

Hebron is a very mountainous district, especially in the neighbourhood of the quarantine but it has a far more cheerful and cultivated appearance than any other part of the country from Gaza to Jerusalem.

The first place I visited was the mosque now built over the very site of the tomb of Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Jacob. No admission could be obtained, as the Turks are particularly fanatical about the sanctity of the place being contaminated by the touch or eyesight of an infidel. The Jews, of course, reverence this spot, as containing the ashes of those forefathers with whom the Covenants of the Promise were made; but, alas for the impious zeal of the Moslem! they dare not even linger near the spot which contains those sacred relics, and their despair and sorrow is strikingly evinced by the manner in which they bewail their fate. Large companies of aged Jews and Jewesses, grown too old to hope for worldly

pleasure, wend their way hither from all corners of the Levant, so as to be buried, in due time, as near as may be to the tomb of their Father Abraham, or at least in the land where the greatest and the wisest of them rest, and where they yet hope to witness the advent of that Messiah, who shall scatter their enemies before them, and gather into one fold the widely-spread children of their dispersed race.

These poor creatures assemble at nightfall around the walls of the mosque, and there, in wildest lamentations, call upon God to restore to them the sceptre that has passed away. In the height of their tribulation, I have seen them dash their heads against the stone-walls, tear out their beards by handfuls, beating their breasts with anguish, till the access of frenzy would gradually abate, through sheer exhaustion. The older and more feeble would then creep slowly and stealthily away, in all probability never again to raise their heads from the pillows on which they rested that night.

A huge tree, said to be the identical one under which the three Heavenly Messengers reposed, who were the bearers of such a fearful doom for

Sodom and Gomorrah, and who, at Abraham's solicitation, accepted of his hospitality, was shown me by the guide. It was certainly a gigantic and time-worn tree, but I will by no means vouch for its reputed antiquity. Whilst reposing beneath its shade for a few minutes, I picked up what I imagined to be the seed of some kidney-beans. I was surprised to find, on breaking one with some difficulty, that it was perfectly petrified. I afterwards discovered that quantities are to be found on the mountains about Hebron. They are certainly curious, and were well worth the trouble of collecting.

I was particularly struck, during this excursion, with the undeviating resemblance, in manners, feelings, and customs, of the people of this day, in Palestine, to the ideas and descriptions conveyed to us, in Holy Writ, of their early Fathers. Should you bargain with a Jew or Arab of Hebron for his field or tenement, rest assured he would, as of old, disclaim all thoughts of a valuable consideration in exchange; your favour and good opinion is all he would covet, at least in the first stages of the compact. But as Abraham finally paid five hundred shekels of silver, which was in

all probability ten times its value, for his burial-place, so surely will your worthy traveller of the nineteenth century pay the modern inhabitant of Palestine over-value for his generously-proffered possessions.

"Ephron answered Abraham, saying unto him, My lord, hearken unto me. The land is worth four hundred shekels of silver; what is that betwixt me and thee? Bury, therefore, thy dead."

Everything is *Mishan Katarak* (for your pleasure). Syrians, especially those of the northern parts, will profess to be ready to sacrifice anything to promote your worldly enjoyment, even their own lives. Trust them if you are credulous, and you may long live to repent the day.

My companions having finally terminated their official business, we returned to Gaza. The time of my final departure from this town now drew nigh. One more expedition, a shooting excursion, was fixed on, as a kind of farewell ramble. We were to proceed in the direction of Ramlah, a village four hours distant from Jaffa, and twelve hours from Gaza—*en route* were various brush-woods, &c., which afforded shelter to partridges, quails, and other game. There were villages to

rest at of an evening, and at Ramlah itself an extensive convent, celebrated for the hospitality of jolly friars.

We set off at the appointed hour on a fixed day. A few larks were stopped in their tuneful career, and a couple of stray quails added to our stock of breakfast delicacies. After breakfast we wandered for many an hour, without having a shot. At last a distant report was heard, and then a second, and a third; then the baying of dogs. The Nazir and myself, who were in the rear, spurred our horses into a gallop, and rode towards the field of action. We arrived just in time to witness the final struggles of a corpulent hare, that was forthwith handed over to the cook, who quickly converted it into as good mock-turtle soup as I have ever tasted.

The first day I had gained no laurels, nor had my friend the Nazir. On the second, however, I was destined to excel, for it so happened that I awoke about two hours before daybreak, and as there was as yet no stir in the village where we had slept, whilst I was lying in bed, meditating whether to get up or not, methought I heard the familiar notes of partridges not very far off. I waited

awhile, and heard the cry again. The moon had not yet set, and there was plenty of light to find one's way about; so rising hastily from my carpet, I dressed, got my gun and ammunition, and followed by a solitary dog that I had awakened for the purpose, crept stealthily down towards the banks of the little streamlet that skirted the village, completely hidden among the brushwood. I was guided by the gamy sound of their voices to where this covey were enjoying the cool early morning. Suddenly I came upon them, and what a sight did I behold! Old Mr. Partridge and Mrs. Partridge, and fourteen young Partridges washing themselves, within five yards of the muzzle of my gun. Both barrels were cocked, and pointing my gun so as to embrace the greater number, I fired both barrels in rapid succession. There was a precious fluttering and scuffling in the water, and the old dog was soon among them disabling the wounded from effecting their escape. I should have followed if I had not had pumps and silk stockings on; as it was, I was wet through above the knees: *n'importe*, Papa and Mamma and five little partridges, the size of decent chickens, were the result of my shot, and I got back again to

the village with a hare in addition to these trophies I was immediately looked up to as a kind of Colonel Hawker, and *certes* I took good care to conceal the ignominious advantage I had taken of the birds. That was a secret between myself and old Juno the dog, and he came in for an equal share of honours with myself. Mr. Gordon Cumming, the African lion slayer, never felt more complacent after his day's work, in disposing of his half-dozen grizzly monarchs of the wood, than did I with that memorable moonlight shot.

With this exception, we had more fun than sport during this day's shooting. Our road lay through corn-fields and cotton plantations, and ever and anon the dogs would make a false point at hedge-hogs, or perchance a half domesticated land-tortoise, a sure sign that they were not thoroughbred. At one time when we had cocked our guns and stood prepared to bag our brace of quails, the scent turned out to be of the carnivorous kingdom, a species of weazel, which infests these countries, and is most destructive to the interests of farmers and planters. The dogs had a hard tussle with the creature, which I think would have got the better of them had

not a well-timed bullet, sent in aid of our pointer from the doctor's pistol, put a period to the combat. A few jays and bee-eaters were shot by my companions; both of these species being considered as dainties, entitled to some humble reference in the game laws, by Europeans inhabiting the Levant.

Towards sunset we drew nigh unto Ramlah, parched with thirst, and by no means unprepared to do justice to the goodly display of viands which the hospitable monks of the convent are wont to set before the wearied wayfarer. The doctor was himself a Catholic, and an intimate and bosom-friend of the Superior's, so under these decided advantages we were sure to fare well, and we felt, moreover, that we deserved and required to do so.

The approach to Ramlah, in coming from Gaza, is extremely picturesque. Finely constructed minarets, and the remains of old watch-towers, are seen peeping out from and over the surrounding thick foliage of olive-trees, whilst the village itself is situated on a slight eminence, thickly studded with vines. The pomegranate and the lemon-tree also grow luxuriantly. On entering within the town, we came upon a kind of square or caravansera;

at one end of which was a well, and in the centre a fountain, supplying water for man and beast. Round the well is a cistern, which is continually being filled by the women of the village for the use of camels, horses, mules, donkeys, and even dogs and cats. Water being a scarce commodity in this neighbourhood, a large concourse of quadrupeds were now assembled about it. The long-legged, long-necked camels were stretching over the backs of their more diminutive neighbours, and slaking their thirst without inconveniencing the rest. Not so the mules and the donkeys, which were kicking and biting their way, edging in as best they could towards the water, to the no small injury of the knees and shins of such as chanced to be mounted on their backs; and these in return belaboured the donkeys' heads and ears with cudgels and horsewhips most soundly. The neighing of horses, the nondescript noises very constantly made by mules in token of their equivocal descent, braying of donkeys, and yelling of dogs, that had been kicked or trodden upon; the attitudes resorted to by the enraged travellers, with their complicated oaths, when in danger of having their shins fractured; the screaming of the

camel-drivers and muleteers, and shrill exclamations of the women, created a most bewildering and distracting scene and clamour. We had the utmost difficulty in restraining our own thirsty animals from joining in the *mêlée*, but the baggage, or rather provision mule, was wholly ungovernable. It kicked off its rider in a very scientific manner, and, before the man could recover his legs, had rushed into the thickest of the fray, whence it emerged after a few minutes, with its whole head and ears dripping with water, but entirely divested of saddle-bags and carpets, and even its very wooden saddle, all which were recovered at a later period of the evening, though in a very lamentable and damaged condition; bottles and plates smashed; all kinds of edibles mashed up with mud and water; and carpets, cloaks, and other articles that had been entrusted to the muleteer's care, wholly devoid of form, shape, or colour.

Dinner, that most welcome of all sounds to a hungry traveller, was suggested to us by the ringing of a deep-toned bell, just as we knocked at the convent's massive doors. After a great deal of unchaining and unbolting, we were admitted by

a meagre and sordid-looking lay brother, the only specimen on the whole establishment however; kept in low condition, I imagine, to expiate some heinous crime, or to serve as a scarecrow to travellers, who might come thither with truculent anticipations of pullets and clotted cream. This skeleton desired to introduce us into the apartments allotted to the use of ordinary travellers, but on the doctor's requesting to be immediately led into the presence of the "Padre Presidenti," he bowed acquiescence, and meekly conducted us, by mysterious and winding corridors, to the august presence of the reverend Superior, a jolly, rubicund, shorn friar—with a shining face and head—a countenance beaming with good-nature, and bloated withal.

"Carissimo mio!" exclaimed he, on embracing the doctor, "why did you not inform me of your intended visit? I should have received you and your good friends as only such should be received. To-morrow, however, we must make full amends for this being Friday. A soup meagre—some eggs and vegetables, are all we can offer you for your supper, but we have plenty of good wine, and gallons of *aqua-vitæ*—such wine and spirits as we

only possess the secret of making. Fato inon-vento ! non fa male mai !"

Everything home-made must needs be good, and in a convent, where so many worthy fathers devote their time and talents in the production of works, spiritual and temporal, for their own individual benefit, there is little fear of anything being admitted otherwise than good.

Monks are frequently jealous and tenacious of the age and other attributes of the wines and spirits contained in their convent cellars, and profess to be utterly astonished at the folly of any man who could, for an instant, entertain a doubt as to their superior excellence. An amusing instance of this laudable peculiarity was related to me by a gentleman who was himself present on the occasion. It would seem that a distinguished English Baronet, travelling in the East, was, as is very often the case, attacked with the fever and ague generally prevalent in these countries during the summer. Care and quinine had in a measure stopped the progress of the malady, but it was yet uneradicated from the system, and the patient felt weak and indisposed for some days after the attacks had ceased. Being recommended change

of air and quiet, he determined to avail himself of the hospitable invitation of the Superior of one of the monasteries situated on Mount Lebanon, in order to procure it. He arrived at the convent, and was beset with kind attentions on every side from the monks, all of whom were, or at least imagined themselves to be, more or less skilled in medical matters; but, like doctors generally, no two agreed on the method of cure. One recommended hot baths; another cold ones, diet, good living, exercise, rest; in short, each opinion expressed was the antithesis of its antecedent. Our traveller, however, expressed faith in the excellence of all the prescriptions, secretly determining to follow none. Dinner was at length announced, and on descending to the dining-room, the guest found a long array of shorn friars, methodically ranged along either side of the table. As guest, the seat of honour, on the right-hand of the Superior, had been reserved for him. Before serving the soup, in accordance with a practice much in use amongst Levantines, *aqua-vitæ* in diminutive glasses, not much bigger than a large-sized thimble, was served round upon a tray, and the Superior presented the Baronet with a

glass, which he was utterly amazed at his refusing to drink, on the score of the possibility of its having injurious effects upon an invalid like himself.

"Fa mali!" ejaculated the Superior, drawing back as if he had been electrified. "Fa mali! why this is a very superior *aqua-vitæ* to what is usually met with in the world; it is made in our own convent. Non puo far mali! mai!—mai! mai! mai!"

The monks took up the strain, and "mai" was echoed and re-echoed by every individual monk at the table, and in every possible variety of tone and accent, tossing off their glasses thereupon, as a proof of their own convictions on the subject; and this was the only point on which Sir W—— B—— ever found them agree.

But to return to our own corpulent friend at Ramlah. He was as good as his word, in regard to the drinkables he had promised, but the supper was abjectly *maigre* and sordid. The soup, decided "hipikik," a word that, though not to be found in Johnson or Walker, signifies in hot countries, "cold water boiled to death." We went to bed, on the whole, rather more hungry than we were

on arriving, an unpleasant fact, and one which made us quite mutinous, and disposed to the planning of mischief, such as ransacking the kitchen, and spitting the cook on his own spit.

The doctor, when all was hushed, crept out of his bed, and stealing into the kitchen bare-footed, found the cook up, at that late hour busy grinding the next day's coffee for the establishment. He worked so well upon this man's good feelings by the gift of a dollar, and the promise of a larger buksish, that, in a little more than an hour, our party was snugly seated at a very excellent supper of fowls, chops, rice, &c., laid out on a table in the dormitory allotted to us—so great a charm has silver, even in the solitary retreats of monks, and beings who have foresworn the world, with all its pomps and vanities!

Supper over, we went again to bed with peaceable and contented minds, and in charity with all men, an enviable condition, which, alas! was not destined to last. Prickly heat, or a rash, seemed of a sudden to make an eruption all over our bodies, and this was the more unaccountable as the weather was cool. Presently there was a sensation of pins and needles being driven into

us. We could no longer stand this, and we jumped out of bed in a frenzy, and groped in every direction for a light. Some matches found, the candle was soon lit—and then! what tongue can picture the almost incredible host of fleas, ay! and worse than fleas, that were sporting over the white sheets and coverlids of our beds. We snatched up such portions of our dress as lay about, hanging upon the chairs, and fled from the room in dismay into the open court-yard. Here, stretched upon hard benches, with stones for pillows, we should have slept but little all that night, had not sheer fatigue completely overcome us. The heavy morning dew had soaked us through and through, when we awoke, cold and shivering, at dawn of the next day.

To prevent any evil results from such an imprudence, we rushed off immediately to the Turkish bath, which even at this early hour was ready for our reception. After undergoing a due degree of steaming and scalding, and scrubbing and rubbing, and getting one's eyes and mouth full of soapsuds, we were in the end amazingly invigorated; and after some good strong coffee and more than one pipe, we returned to

the convent, like giants refreshed with wine, and rejoicing in our strength. The worthy brethren ought in charity to get iron bedsteads to replace the wooden ones now set up.

Nobody ever breakfasts in these parts before noon: a small cup of coffee is all that is to be expected or asked for, and you would be looked upon as an ogre or a ghoul, if caught munching a crust of bread before that hour.

The chief of the convent at Ramlah assured me, that he calculated the passage of European pilgrims and travellers who passed through Ramlah on their way to or from Jerusalem, to be on an average ten individuals per diem, who for a greater or less period partake of the good cheer and shelter afforded them here.

What delightfully philanthropic hotels such convents are! You are waited upon and fed and, if unluckily necessary, physicked, and all this for the love, not of filthy lucre, but of charity. No bill hangs in mental terrorem over your head; there is no stout, obstinate landlord to contend with on a matter of conscience; no expectant waiter to fee for smiling benignantly behind a white cravat; no chambermaids, those least of all public evils;

and above all no commissaire to bother about passports. 'Tis true there is no railway as yet established from Ramlah to Jaffa, neither had I a private carriage standing at the convent door; but though denied the conveniences, I was free from many of the disadvantages, of a tourist in Europe. In fact, I was fain to depart with a couple of donkeys, and as these rugged animals were residents of Jaffa, and had arrived too late the preceding night for supper, my ostler, I afterwards found, kept them also without breakfast, knowing well the playful propensities of the stubborn race after a good meal, and their great predilection to a snail's pace and a thistle bush. Hunger acts better than whip or spur, and if anything earthly will induce a donkey to trot, it is the knowledge that he is homeward bound with a bag of oats in perspective. After partaking of a *déjeûner à la fourchette*, I bid adieu to our worthy friends and to my kind companions from Gaza, promising these latter faithfully that I would once more pass through their home near the desert after visiting Jerusalem and the Holy Villages.

I had but two donkeys in my humble retinue, one I bestrode myself, the other carried my

travelling pack; but there was a whole detachment of light and empty animals that had been on duty the night previous, and were lucky enough to return burthenless. Away we went, helter-skelter, over a level plain, that seemed just cut out for a race or a coursing match. Sometimes my feet, which were almost on a level with the ground, got very uncomfortable knocks and scratches as they came in contact with a bush or stone. I dared not raise them higher, for fear of losing my equilibrium, and it was no easy task balancing oneself on a bit of stuffed rag, that was slipping in every direction. Away we went—plain and hillock, sand-hill and priory, appeared and disappeared with amazing rapidity.

By this time our company had been considerably strengthened by parties from villages that lay on the way-side. These latter were jogging on quietly enough, till overtaken by our galloping squad, and then the quiet, sedate, and market-going old Turks, who had never been guilty of putting their donkeys to anything faster than an amble, were involved with us in inextricable confusion, and, to their own astonishment, tore over the ground at a frantic pace, in company

with an unbelieving Frank, and a legion of riderless asses. They had, indeed, enough to do to hold on, and keep their panniers and themselves from falling to pieces, which prevented their attempting any argumentative defence, or reply to the scores of questions that were hooted after them by persons we encountered on the road. One or two were rash enough to enter on the experiment, but it was a complete failure; and the violent jogging, occasioned by the rapid motion, caused their voices to tremble and quaver in a most violent manner. Words, commenced in a very high key, rattled and shook down their throats, and ended in an irrepressible groan, like the bursting of the bellows in a church organ, in the middle of a symphony. I laughed so much, and got so much shaken, and had such an aching stitch in my side in consequence, that I was glad to dismount, and walk a few paces, when the donkeys at length came to a stand, which they did on nearing the gates of Jaffa. They stopped for two very excellent reasons —one was a large fountain outside of the gate— the other, that their usual abiding place, when at home, was just outside the town.

Having recovered breath, I looked upon the

jaunt as a capital joke; I think the old villagers did not enjoy the fun so much, at least, they looked not as men generally look who are in exuberant spirits, especially one venerable old fellow, with a very long white beard, who kept up a succession of ghastly grins. We were yet about half a mile from the gates, but I determined to perform this distance on foot, and enter Jaffa as though I were one of its denizens, who had only strolled out for exercise and air—quite as dignified a procedure, I thought, as riding in on a tired donkey, and certainly a more safe one, considering the shoals of camels and refractory mules that were pouring out of the gates at this late hour of the day, for it was just at five, P.M.

Having directed the proprietor of my donkeys to proceed direct to the Latin Convent so soon as he had refreshed himself and his animals, I strolled leisurely onwards, occupied in taking a survey of the town, the fortress, and the open roadstead, with the wretched ships that seemed perpetually bowing to each other, or rolling listlessly in the heavy sea-way. As I advanced I met a monk, and a little way behind him two others, and then a party of

travellers, mounted on animals of every description, from a camel to a donkey. These were soon followed by men bearing flags, and then came a score or two of women, in loose blue gowns, or rather sacks, and all their faces, from the eyes to the lips, covered with tassels, resembling very much what are used to keep the flies off horses. I was, as may be supposed, both interested and puzzled by this pageant. It could not be a marriage. The people were not merry enough to indicate a wedding, and, as there was no wailing, it could not be a funeral. In fact, it was a kind of intermediate act—a prelude to a marriage feast, and a sequel to a funeral. They had just been disposing of one fellow villager, by putting him into a hole in an overstocked burial-place, and they were now returning to the village to celebrate the nuptials of another.

The men in the procession conversed in the future tense. They spoke of dances and mock combats, of bridegrooms and veiled brides, and were eloquent on the subject of pillaufs in perspective. Not so the women. These, in fit keeping with their grave-yard appearance (and awfully like skulls their faces did look, with large sunken

eyes and brilliant teeth, the intermediate nose being quite hidden by the net-work), kept up a dirge relative to by-gone events, and chaunted a laudatory lay in honour of the friend they had just interred. Being well acquainted with Arabic, I understood all they said, and am thus able to furnish a notion of a modern Arab dirge.

"Oh! Abdalla," they exclaimed, "was a just man, a good man, and one that feared God; yet he has forgotten us, and has left us, his widows and his children, his friends and his acquaintances, to mourn for the shadow that has fallen in his pathway." So chaunted one of the party; and when she came to a stop, the whole body set up a chorus of lamentations, that made the air sigh again with sorrow. Then each, in succession, sang a line or two in praise of the defunct; and when she had ended, wailings and lamentations again filled the air; yet, while indulging these transports of grief, their laudatory phrases conveyed, when understood, ideas ludicrous beyond measure. Any kind-hearted being, ignorant of the language, would have been moved to tears and sighs of commiseration by their heart-rending

tones and cries; while, in point of fact, he would be weeping at a comic song; for, when all rational praises were exhausted, the mourners resorted to such traits and endowments as are, at best, of an equivocal character.

We were told that the defunct was a very fat man. "Abdalla *mashalla*" (praises be to God) "a very fat man! and the good things of this earth—the *pillaufs* and the *kabobs*, the *kobeg* and the *yaknee*—these all grew very lean, when set before him." I have no doubt they did; for the chances are, that a poor wretch in the situation of the lamented Abdalla, had rarely a chance of discussing such luxuries. "I was as a dove in the clutches of a tiger," moaned one of the relicts, "when he pressed me to his bosom, in the warmth of his affection." With this lady I felt inclined to litigate on the spot; for, however tiger-like the poor departed might have been, there was about as much similitude between the mourner and a dove as might exist, I should imagine, between an angel and a hyena. In short, though the music of the lamentation was melancholy itself, the songstress was an old beldame, who looked old enough and ugly enough

to follow quickly in the wake of Abdalla. Such was my conviction, as I passed on and entered Jaffa.

The finest market for fruit and vegetables is held just outside the town. That brought inside, is sold retail, and is dearer, and of a worse quality. Melons and citrons may here be had in perfection, and are a perfect *bouquet* of scent in themselves. The oranges, the pomegranates, the figs, the grapes, absolutely die and wither unnoticed, because no one will taste their nectar. The most delicious fruits are so cheap, that you might load a ship with them for a couple of pounds. Think of fifty oranges for twopence! and then being allowed to pick the best.

A little beyond this bazaar is a gipsy's encampment, comprising black smoky tents with blacker tenants. These remain here the whole summer, and what they cannot get by charity they steal. Little fear is there of their wanting fruits or vegetables: they stumble over stalls *accidentally*, and generally manage to upset the vender, who in his excessive wrath, finds himself so much entangled by his own goods, as to be unable to raise himself without the assistance of his commercial brethren. A crowd soon collects round the unfortunate man,

and in the confusion that necessarily arises, the gipsies are advantageously engaged in enriching themselves.

Of an evening, a motley crowd is usually collected about this spot. Amongst others, sea-wolves in blue woollen shirts and braces, with straw hats and inflamed countenances, are seen prowling about. These are the masters or skippers of the various English colliers in port, for no foreign captain would ever land in such a free and easy guise. These original personages usually wear, as a set off to the blue Guernsey frock, a pair of very tarry trousers, and a fiery red neckerchief. Their pace is solemn, their features composed, and their conversation verges on the sublime. They have been taking a little exercise, and a great deal of rum and water; hence the symbols used to illustrate their arguments are not unfrequently incoherent to casual listeners, and they are invariably attended by that most unfortunate and unhappy specimen of humanity, the cabin boy. The boys are laden with baskets intended to receive the purchases made for to-morrow's fare. After going to and fro for some time, one skipper feels so overcome by the effects of the cordiality of his compeers, and

the frequent potations of rum and water, that he is ready to burst with contentment and generosity, and he forthwith invites the others to come and partake of a one o'clock dinner. The invitation accepted, the attendant imp, the cabin boy, is summoned into active service on the spot. Oranges and other fruit are purchased, and more carefully counted than bales of Manchester manufactures, put into the basket, and at every purchase made, the luckless apprentice receives a cuff or two from the horny hand of his nautical mentor, with a precautionary warning, in the startling vernacular in those distant climes, of—"You'd better ago and eat some of them afore you gets 'em aboard, and see what a warmin' I'll give you." As for the other masters, they fall to and cuff their lads for coming on shore at all, though ordered to do so at the peril of their lives, at a previous period of the day, when the hospitable invite of the brother skipper before adverted to could not have been foreseen.

Everything being purchased, and the boys having been cuffed and buffeted about, they are allowed to depart. The skippers walk portentously arm in arm into town, and are rowed off to their

dingy citadels, which are rolling and pitching in the harbour. The crowd gradually thins and disperses. The hour is late, the streets muddy and dark, and the gates of the town are shut for the night.

CHAPTER V.

Jaffa—An unpleasant lodging—An Oriental cook—The cauldron of soup—Shipping grain—The convent—Sufferers from plague—The soup vender—Simon the Tanner—The English Consul—Story of an Italian doctor.

I AROSE from the couch in the cell allotted me at the convent, by early dawn, the day after my arrival. Oh! the luxury of that blessed night's rest! the calm, uninterrupted sleep that I enjoyed within the sanctuary of its walls; nor heat, nor flea, nor other vile disturber of man's peace upon earth had interrupted my repose, and I rose fresh and vigorous as the dawn of that pleasant morning.

There were yet no signs of any one stirring, so I opened the lattice window, and gazed forth

with delight on the picture before me. There lay the calm deceptive sea, looking like a mirror whose surface could never be ruffled by squalls and mighty tempests, and shipwreck and death; the edges of the horizon were lit up with the golden light of the sun's earliest rays, and a zephyr moved lightly on its surface, waking nature as it passed by the warm touch of her breath. Beneath, were the terraces of the houses composing this still slumber-wrapt town, and which descended like gigantic steps till they verged into a level with the fortifications by the sea-side, (for Jaffa is built upon a hill, up to the very summit of which the edifices extend.) Beyond this, there was a long hedge of rocks, round which the rippling wave now sported indolently, and half a mile beyond again, lay the ships in the harbour; English, French, Prussian, Italian, Greek and Turkish, all destined to carry the produce of the corn-fields of the Holy Land to European markets. Along the beach that runs towards the Caiaffa side, were thickly strewn the wrecks of vessels of all nations and sizes, from the fine English barque of four hundred tons to the insignificant Arab felucca.

This place was only a few years since avoided

by British ships, as though it were a hot-bed for plague; but the recent establishment of our own British consulate and the Consul's energetic measures to support trade, have, in combination with the free admission of foreign corn into England, drawn considerable numbers of English vessels to it during the last three years. Another stumbling-block was the unwillingness felt at Lloyds' to insure vessels loading at Jaffa. This has also been overcome; and though several fine vessels have been lost, from want of care or from accident, it is to be hoped that when proper precautions are taken, these sad catastrophes may be entirely avoided.

The 'Agnes,' 'Courier,' and 'Savandraprovy,' three British vessels, were totally wrecked in November, 1850; whereas the French vessels, by a timely escape to sea, weathered the tempest without loss or injury.

Whilst I was occupied in gazing forth, there arose a sudden and gradually increasing commotion and stir in the buildings, which warned me that the sleepers were awakening to a sense of their miseries, and their joys. A deep moan broke from the cell next to mine, and was caught up

and echoed by the tenants of the different rooms on either side of the long corridor. This was by no means a pleasing demonstration, so I dressed as speedily as I could, and issued forth into the corridor. There, as I proceeded, I perceived the pale attenuated forms of poor invalids, stretched on their warm and unhealthy couches, with their half-shut glazy staring eyes intently and wildly gazing at the half-open door, as though death were the next person they expected to see enter.

These were all travellers, and formed not half the number that were within the convent's precincts, sick and in bed like themselves. Some had been attacked with fever on the way down from Jerusalem, others had fallen ill on the spot. In short, the whole town was ravaged by a virulent fever, and the convent was little more or less than a thickly crowded hospital. The little French doctor had plenty to do and more to pocket, and he was the only one that, on the whole, benefitted by the season. He took gold whilst others took a fever.

I passed on hurriedly from this wretched scene, and met as I descended the steps a corpse borne down for interment. This was agreeable, and

the sickly miasma that floated up and down, and around the place, like a vulture before pouncing on its prey, warned me to retreat to my cell again, where having secured and locked up my few traps, so that I might send for them to other lodgings without myself returning, I made a rush down to the ground floor of the place, and disappeared through the gate, making my way as well as I could to the water-side.

As I mentioned before, the town of Jaffa is built up the sides of a hill. This hill is in a conical form, and the ascent and descent approximates to the perpendicular. The streets are vile in the extreme and very slippery in the summer, owing to the water and other slops thrown out of the windows. In the winter the torrents of rain water that rush down, entirely sweep away this layer of abominations, and leave a hard dry soil to walk upon. I was in danger of slipping every instant, and only saved myself by clinging tightly to the stones of the buildings which, not being plastered over, were easily grasped. If you do slip, the only thing that can bring you up is the sharp angle of some gloomy wall.

I at last found myself in the main street of

Jaffa: it is a tolerable one, admitting of two or three loaded camels passing abreast, but it was sadly encumbered with rubbish and dirt. Half pyramids of filth were piled up against the sides of the fortress walls. The walls themselves were in a sadly dilapidated condition, and fast crumbling away to mother earth; spars and large portions of wrecks, anchors, and cables, heavy capstans and windlasses, were scattered about in every direction, and had each distinct claimants and owners, who set their hearts upon these melancholy relics of other lands, which they had purchased for perhaps a proportionate number of water-melons, in the hope of selling them to great advantage some day to a ship in distress.

The hour was yet early, and most of the magazines and shops were shut, but watermen and porters had already assembled, and were partaking of light wholesome refreshment at the only Turkish restaurant in Jaffa. It was not an over-busy establishment, nor could it put forward many pretensions to excellence. In its old iron stove, rusty and unpolished as the owner himself, a large iron cauldron was simmering away plea-

santly over a charcoal fire; with a ladle of monstrous dimensions to ladle out the contents. Beyond this the whole stock in trade did not exceed four old cracked Cyprus cups, and a small camp table, on which stood, in addition to the cups, two large wooden castors for pepper and salt.

I imagined at first that the proprietor of this establishment was disposing of not very choice coffee, as its well-known aroma failed to reach my olfactory organ; and I was strengthened in this supposition, when I saw him use the castors, plentifully sprinkling the smoking fluid with their contents, which I conceived to be a cheap and curious contrivance for flavouring the liquid with sugar and cinnamon, a sherbet of this kind being often served in Syrian villages to such as cannot afford the luxury of genuine coffee. One of his many customers, however, approached me, inviting me to join in his breakfast, and then to my horror I observed that the mess consisted of very weak greasy broth, immoderately seasoned with pepper and salt to mask its native deficiency. The cream of the thing was, that the cook beat his cooking "all to snakes," as

Jonathan would say. Being unable to read or write, the only method of advertizing and recommending his execrable soup to the attention of passers-by, was by puffing it practically, and in this art he was inimitable. His gesticulations and arguments were a perfect fund of amusement, and I was highly diverted at the imploring manner in which he beckoned to some sulky-looking camel-driver to partake of his refreshment; the oft-repeated assurance that it would brace him up and secure him from any known malady to which mortals are subjected; and praying Allah to inflict all evils in case of refusal, such as plague in a variety of forms, terrific denunciations, that had invariably the effect of converting the simple by-standers into eager customers. They had a great awe of this old fellow, who used mysteriously to disappear each day, and never be seen again till the next morning at the stated hour; and at that hour he was sure to be there, rain, hail or sleet. None could guess whither he went, or whence he came, and few had courage enough to trace him to his secret home. On one occasion he had cursed a party of young men, who were secretly on his track; and as by a singular coincidence

two of the party died shortly after, his fame spread far and wide.

Now he rushed about securing customers by the dozen. He would kiss them and embrace them, coax and threaten them by turns, while pocketing the small coins that came pouring into his treasury, with the satisfied air of one who had discharged his moral obligations towards his fellow-brethren. What related to his necromantic vocation as a Sheik, was recounted to me in an under-tone by a boatman, whose eyes nearly started out of their sockets when he came to the part of the impious young men that were cursed, and had died. How could any one refuse to taste of the broth from that old man's cauldron?

Shops and magazines began now to be opened, and the bustle of life commenced. Sedate-looking Turks, in long fur-lined cloaks, stalked gravely down to their respective offices, followed by some half-dozen retainers, who were laden with pipes, tobacco, the requisites for indispensable coffee, ledgers, writing implements, carpets, and divan-cushions. These were the several functionaries attached to the Custom-house, the Quarantine, and the Passport Offices, all of which

departments were situated on the least ruined parts of the tottering ramparts. Porters, with heads bowed down like miniature Atlases, came staggering along with huge sacks of grain on their backs, and small tickets in their hands, which latter they delivered to a Government officer, stationed at the landing-place for this purpose. As they neared the gate, they kept screaming out the name of the shipper of the grain with stentorian lungs, for the guidance of merchants' clerks, sent to keep tally of the sacks shipped by their employers, and also to prevent confusion amongst the many boats which were loading at the landing-place for the various vessels in the roads. Thus the porter shouted "Larti," and the "Larti's" clerk immediately took up the cry, and made a note of the sack as it passed. Then the boatmen employed by "Larti" re-echoed the cry of both, adding, to show that there was no mistake, "Scuner Inglese," or "Bric Francese," whichever country the vessel belonged to which Larti was loading. Perhaps eight or ten different merchants were sending down grain for their respective vessels, and the din occasioned by the repetition of their not very euphonious names was

quite bewildering. "Eben Abov Moustafa," cried one, "Bustras Nepoti," bawled another, "Sheik Halil Eben Sheik Gereed," "Zenkénia Kiskaponi," "Demetrius Theophisticles," "Moosi Moosi Eben Moosi," "Abdelrahman Eben Habeeb," "Signor Jacko," "Capetano Gerosino," &c., and a continual repetition of these throughout the day.

After being nearly knocked over and trodden to death by a caravan of loaded camels, and being hustled and jostled out of breath, I fled for refuge into a species of half shop, half billiard-room, which had attracted my attention. It had been swept out on Easter Monday then last past (about four months previous), and was redolent with *aqua-vitæ*, wine, fish-fried oil, and onions. The proprietor was a Greek from Cyprus, and much addicted to cheating and lying, being a strenuous observer of the Greek fasts. He acted as a kind of ship-chandler to British shipmasters, but being wholly innocent of English, had formed a kind of compact with two Greeks from Smyrna, who spoke English, French, and Italian, after their fashion, and whom he therefore regarded as very dangerous rivals at a time when English vessels were beginning to frequent Jaffa.

No French or Italian captains ever dream of employing ship-chandlers. Indeed they require little in the ship-chandlery way; their crews being chiefly maintained upon haricot blancs and stok-fis, as they call it, and of which commodities they ever have a large store; but English vessels generally run up a bill of from fifteen to twenty pounds in Jaffa, one-half of which sum may be set down as the net profit of these three Greeks. The Cyprus man was old in years and wickedness, and had always his eyes and ears about him. Not so the two Smyrniotes, who, however, were excellent friends, so long as they kept sober, though once embarked in a carousal, they invariably quarrelled, and came to blows, to the great terror of the Cypriote. In the course of their partnership they had managed to knock out the whole of each other's front teeth, which gave them a very disreputable look, but that was only in keeping with the shop itself, and everything in it. As for the billiard-table, it might have been the second or third, if not the first, ever constructed, and the cloth had the appearance of a badly-executed map of the world. Pieces a foot square had been torn entirely off, and there were rivers

and mountains, and bays, and oceans delineated by ink-blots and wine-stains, and grease and oil, and holes burnt by the hot embers from many a pipe-bowl. Two of the balls were in tolerable condition; the third had a piece about half an inch in diameter fairly chipped out. Notwithstanding all these manifold defects, it was much frequented, being the only one in the town. Consular clerks played pool with Greek shippers for a glass of lemonade or coffee and narghilies; and English shipmasters played for shillings, or for bottles of Guiness's stout.

There was always a large meeting of divers classes at Signor Meola's (for so was the Greek called) during the day. People came to eat fish there, that had been fried a week before, and drink sour wine, and with this comfortable repast contented themselves till night-fall. Others mumbled detestable soapy cheese, such as the sons of Ishmael can alone digest—more like bits of carious limestone than any Christian composition. Onions and salt fish and *aqua vitæ* were also in great demand by a particular class of low boatmen, descended from the Prophet; and the Signiorii, the *élite*, the Sardinian and other clerks, mer-

chants, and *incognitos*, indulged in villainous porter, at eighteenpence a bottle, and saveloys and cigars.

Death, thought I, is better than destruction in such dreadful holes as this semi-demi tavern; so I fled precipitately to the convent again, and got there in time for a nice, clean-looking, substantial breakfast, to which sundry monks and myself did ample justice. The viands were good, the wine superior; and as its effects circulated in the warm blood of the good old padres, they grew more cordial and chatty. The fever, its causes, origin, and possible results were skilfully discussed; and I found they attributed it principally to the quantities of ripe and unwholesome fruit that were consumed generally at this season. "We, you see," said the President, "have our fruit brought daily from our own garden, where it is gathered only when arrived at proper maturity—not one day before or after. Besides, we do not stint ourselves in good wine or spirits, both which will counteract any bad effects occasioned by fruit; whereas the Turks—heretics that they are—and other fools like them, live almost entirely upon fruit and vegetables, and drink gallons of filthy

water, and 'furjaus' of detestably bitter coffee. The natural result is sickness, if not death.

"*A-propos* in support of what I say, I will relate you a little anecdote relative to a countryman of mine, a talented but very poor physician, whom hunger brought out to these parts long before you or even I were thought of. In those days Europeans were scarce, and anybody with a hat and a smooth face must necessarily be a 'hackem,' and a 'hackem' was a *rara avis* much sought after, and much cherished by the natives. Now, my countryman was really a talented man, and learned in his profession, but grievously lacked that great stand-by of life, money. Beyond a scantily-furnished wardrobe, and a thinly-lined purse, he had little to rely upon in this country, save his talents and his medicine chest. Unluckily for him, the season proved remarkably healthy, and, with the exception of one or two simple agues, neither was called into play. Next year, however, he resolved upon a stratagem, which he imagined must entail success. He had observed in his walks amongst the gardens, in the environs of the town, the strict watch that was kept by the numerous

gardeners over the cucumbers and the melons, the green apricots, and other indigestible fruits, which were eyed with envious and hungry eyes from the wrong side of the prickly pear hedges, by the hungry passers-by, especially boys and girls, some of whom were the children of the wealthiest inhabitants of Jaffa. He determined to remedy this evil, by renting a garden for the season, and laying open decoy gaps in the hedge large enough to admit one person at a time, and give free access to the hungry man and greedy child. Accordingly, having taken a garden, he had his tent pitched in the very centre of it, and there he sat and studied dry books through the weary hours of a July day.

"His servant, 'Giovanni,' a Genoese, being uninitiated in the designs of his master, was seized one day with great wrath on perceiving a burly peasant coolly stuck up on the branches of a fine apricot-tree, and devouring the unripe fruit by the basketful. Rushing into the medico's presence, he apprised him of what was going on. 'Let him alone,' replied the placid doctor; 'let him have his fill of fruit: he is working out good occupation for me.' The servant retired, with

orders to watch his further movements, and report accordingly, but soon returned.

"'What now?' said the doctor, 'as he reappeared. What is our bird on the perch about now?' 'Oh! he has finished eating fruit, and is drinking *aqua vitæ* out of a large leathern bottle.' 'The deuce he is,' screamed the Esculapian, starting up from his chair in a frenzy of rage. 'Why, that will counteract the evil effects of the fruit. *Scaciatela subito!* out with him. Beat him, punch his head, vile thief and robber, that he is!' And the peasant had to thank the swiftness of his legs for escaping scathless from the infuriated doctor. You see," said the jolly old Superior, "I have a doctor's opinion to back me in what I say. There is nothing like a little good wine and spirits after partaking of fruit."

Every one laughed heartily at this anecdote, and we forgot for a moment the dying and the dead. On rising from the table, however, the idea of having to sleep in that terrible cell, surrounded by groaning sufferers, made me feel rather uncomfortable. It was true some hours were yet to elapse, but I thought it best to strike whilst the iron was hot, or, rather, the

chief in good humour; and so I boldly made up to him, and, as briefly as I could, stated my wishes, adding that I should esteem it an especial favour if he would order me a resting-place for the short time I remained in Jaffa, as far removed from the unhealthy side of the convent as he conveniently could. He most obligingly gave orders to this effect on the spot, and I was hurried, bag and baggage, into a capital little cloister, on the first floor of this Samaritan hotel. Matters being thus satisfactorily arranged, I sallied forth to visit a few acquaintances that lived in Jaffa.

I first called on Dr. Keyat, our Consul. I knocked at the door, and then waited a little while, when it was slowly turned on its hinges, and a huge stick, topped with silver with a large nob at the end, made its appearance, followed by the apparition of a large white turban and a pair of goggle eyes, staring out from a perfect thicket of uncultivated whisker, beard, and moustache. It asked me who I was, or what I wanted; and in reply I held out a card, which was whipped out of my hand like magic. The apparition disappeared with the word "wackaf," which means "wait awhile;" and I waited accordingly, till after

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a few seconds, the door was thrown wide open, and I discovered that the head, and the stick, and the whiskers belonged to no less a personage than the Consular Cawass, who now stood revealed in all the conscientious pride and dignity of his official position and an elaborately braided suit of green. "Be pleased to walk in, Sir;" and in I went, and was ushered into Mr. Keyat's drawing-room, which is very tastefully fitted up, and commands a charming view of the sea and shipping.

The Consul received me most graciously. He is indeed a very worthy man, with an amiable wife and family, all chatty and friendly, and free from Consular etiquette. I passed half an hour most agreeably in the society of Mr. Keyat, and then proceeded to make my second call. This was on Mr. Jaba, the Director of the Quarantine.

Mr. Jaba lived outside the town, and I had to wind through all the bazaars, and shops, and granaries before arriving at the gate. It was a busy and a dusty day. Scores of old women were cribbling sessame seed in the middle of the streets for native merchants. Camels were bringing in

grain from the country; and Government officers were having the same weighed before it was warehoused, a proceeding which seemed to excite indignant wrath in the merchants, who were obliged to pay duty for a considerable weight of dust that had got mixed up with the wheat. Wretched-looking men, very hot and thickly powdered over with dust, were measuring wheat ready for shipment, into sacks of all colours and sizes; dandified shopkeepers, with consciences as small as the paper cigars they smoked, were selling nic-nacs, and toys, and tom-fooleries, at a thousand per cent. profit, to simple Turks and Arabs. And in the midst of all this riot and confusion, an old Turkish derwish was deluding himself with the vain hope that the choice verses of the Koran, which he chanted with a very nasal twang, would secure for him the charity and sympathies of the more fanatical passers-by.

A couple of Turkish sentries were playing at backgammon under the arches of the principal gateway, and the rest of the main guard were carefully stretched on benches fast asleep, and totally lost to all sense of care or duty. There were not many people at the fruit market when I

passed, for it was too hot to think of buying or selling: so I went on unmolested, and as the dogs kept by gipsies are apt to be ferocious, I walked as far from them as I conveniently could.

There is a fine large dyke all round the fortress of Jaffa, which might be filled, I presume, from the sea, in cases of emergency. When I passed it was perfectly dry, and women and children were busily employed in it, gathering such herbs and salads as they commonly live upon during fast time. I observed several very fine-looking brass cannon, mounted, and apparently in good condition. On the whole, I have no doubt were this fortress put into thorough repair, it could hold out toughly against an enemy.

Mr. Jaba was at home, and so was Madame, and very pleasant people they both were. Here I was told of the place, which tradition assigns as the residence of Simon the Tanner, and where the very ruins of his house are said to be still in existence, with the well from which his wife used to draw water. I went to the venerated spot, provided with a guide, and instead of having to go round by the same tedious road, he led me

by a far nearer way into the town, and we had scarcely scaled the ruined fragment of the fortress, when we arrived at our destination. A very ancient stony-looking ruin I found it, with all the stones and plaster run into each other, and cemented into a mass of rock-like substance, which it would bother an Arab mason to hack or hew, or make any impression upon. And there stood the well, strong in old age, and matted round with all kinds of green, dampish-looking grass.

A rope and a bucket are left here at all times, for the benefit of such as wish to partake of the water. I took a long draught and then I plunged my face into the water. It was deliciously refreshing and cold, as though it had been iced. On tasting it, my mind involuntarily turned back to those remote days, when it might, in truth, have slaked the thirst of the pious tanner, or even of his holy guest, when, led by Divine inspiration, he came here to preach and to teach, and to learn himself that sublime lesson which showed that the Almighty Father of all is no Respecter of persons.

It was in Jaffa, too, that Dorcas died, and was restored to life. We are told in Scripture, that

the tanner's house stood near the sea-shore. This corresponds with the situation of the ruins, and I have little doubt that before the erection of the present battlements, it stood much nearer to the sea. Indeed, I believe that very lately a vessel or boat of very antique structure has been dug up within the fortress walls; a tolerable proof that the sea has receded.

What indescribable emotions I experienced to find myself actually in Joppa!—in Joppa, whence Jonah embarked on his prophetic embassy! and now in this very Joppa was I, poor mortal of the nineteenth century, standing on the ruins of Simon's house, and watching the 'Grand Turk' steamer as she hove in sight, coming possibly from the very spot where Jonah again reached the land. But the matter of fact was fatal alike to the illusion and the association, and I hurried away to the landing-place, arriving just in time to see the first boat-load of passengers touch the shore.

A Jew, who was very old and infirm, and could not get on the jetty, was hooked up by his sash by a waterman, who flung him on a bale of wool to recover his breath; another, in a similar con-

dition, was served in the same way; and three Jewesses, abominably old and helpless, were hoisted up by the conjoint efforts of bystanders and boatmen, and safely landed. More of the fallen race were at the bottom of the boat, with a couple of bales of merchandise placed lightly over them by mistake, and with more groans than breath left in their bodies.

So much for the prow of the boat. Everything in the stern-sheets was as yet hid by a mountain of packages piled up in the middle; But those soon disappeared, and a whole tribe of Israel rose up in the boat—veritable descendants of Abraham, all come from various quarters of the Levant, and decked out in grotesque costumes of other centuries. The men who were found under the bales are beginning to recover and are asking faintly for their goods; and boat after boat now arrives, all freighted similarly. The custom-house officers are having everything carried into the custom-house stores, because the sun is just setting and the office will then shut up for the night; frantic Israelites swear they will not be separated from their effects, but this makes little impression upon the authorities, who have

boxes carried off with the owners perched on the top, and both are carefully locked up till the morrow.

The last boat brings the aristocracy on shore; the more important first and second-class passengers. There are no Jews amongst these, but there is a Frenchman, who comes skipping lightly out of the boat, as flexible in every limb as the little rattan he flourishes; and there is a fierce-looking military man, with spurs, which are getting entangled in every bale he steps over, and scratch a vicious boatman, who repays the compliment with abuse. Then there are one or two other nondescript travellers, who have been wretchedly sea-sick all the voyage, and seem to have forgotten what constitutes a smile. There is a little skirmishing for buchish on the part of the boatmen, and then every one is hustled and jostled into the town, as the sea-gate is about to be shut; and the gate-keeper looks so grave and important, that you would never believe, if you did not try him, that he would open these very gates for you at any given hour of the night for such a small consideration as ten paras.

The Jews, excepting such as have been locked

up in the custom-house, march off in a body, heaven knows whither! the other passengers also disappear; and of eighty-five Israelites, and about six Christians, who were only two minutes ago squabbling and fighting, not a vestige remains. I am left alone and in the dark, and am congratulating myself on my extreme good luck in having got into better quarters before the Frenchman arrived, who may be a Count, with a firmament of stars and decorations; when I remember suddenly that I have been imprudent enough to neglect the precaution of pocketing the key of my cell, and this, coupled with the horrid thought of being too late for dinner, hurries me homeward. I run and tumble over anchors, and run again and fall over a spar, till at length breathless and bruised I reach the convent, pocket the key of my room, seat myself at table, and am soon busily engaged discussing the good things, and hearing all the latest news from Syria and Europe.

I found that the new arrivals intended starting for Jerusalem the next day, and as they appeared to be kind and courteous people, inclined to be

agreeable and amusing, I agreed to make one of the party. Accordingly, at one o'clock the next day we started for "El Shereef," the holy, the ancient city of the Israelites.

CHAPTER VI.

Journey to Jerusalem—Our caravan—Fatiguing march—Water in the Desert—The pilgrims' birds—Bishop Heber—The Holy City—Hotel de Palmir.

THE horses provided for the use of travellers by the chief of the muleteers at Jaffa are of a superior description to those furnished elsewhere in Palestine; and the saddles, though thoroughly Turkish, are comfortably padded, a great luxury to such as, by accident, or want of forethought, arrive without their own English ones. But, however well off you may be on this score, the natives always raise difficulties to your using your own saddle; first, because the horse, on arriving at its destination, is apt to remain without covering until its return home, unless, by some lucky chance, a return fare be found who replaces the saddle removed by another; and secondly, because

being accustomed to a thickly-padded "surge," or pack of the country, it is apt, as they imagine, to be chafed by so simple-looking a contrivance as an English saddle. Travellers, however, who come out with the laudable design of going over as large a space of ground in as little time as they possibly can, usually purchase horses at the place they first start from, and dispose of their weary jades on leaving the country at the port of embarkation, thus avoiding the inconvenience of wrangling with muleteers on the subject of sore backs. This plan suits travellers well enough: if they only recover one-half of the original cost-price of the animal, they have lost nothing by the bargain, having already long since worked out the value of the beast. But taking my time, as I did, in my travels, halting for weeks and months at many of the places I visited, such an arrangement would ill suit my convenience; for if the horses were not stolen, they would be sure to be neglected in quarters, unless under my own immediate supervision, and either die of neglect, or prove incapable of undergoing the fatigue of an ordinary day's journey; Arab grooms, as well as their more refined brethren of Europe, being fond

of practising that pleasant experiment whereby a horse is ingeniously brought to subsist upon a bean a day. Under such circumstances, I sold my saddlery at Jaffa, and adapted myself to the usages of the country, learning by experience that this was by far the wisest plan in almost every instance.

I found that a party of foreigners, principally Italians, who, for some *délits politiques*, had been obliged to fly their country, were going my way, so we joined issue. One of our party, the man with undaunted brow and ferocious frown referred to in the last chapter, had been, according to his own statement, a Captain of infantry; and at the head of his unconquerable company, with fixed bayonets, had resisted, in his day, the swooping charge of whirlwinds of cavalry. Lisbon, in the great earthquake, had not sustained more ruinous shocks. Apparently this hero, in the confusion of a hasty departure from *la patria*, had forgotten many necessary and useful articles, amongst which I might certainly number his courage, not one particle of which he could now summon to his aid. Mounted on a donkey of small dimensions, but very playful disposition, his agonies of alarm

were amusing beyond expression. There was nothing but a halter with which to guide the poor brute, so that for any progressive steps it might take in the right direction, he was left entirely at the mercy of its roving propensities, and dependent on an occasional cudgelling, inflicted by some of the muleteers who brought up our rear. It is a common practice with the natives of Syria to hold long expostulary conversations with the quadruped creation; and the maledictions that were heaped on this particular animal must have brought it to an immediate conviction of its errors, had it understood or appreciated half what was said. The tone of the master's voice had a perfectly magical effect, and a cry of "Hoi! Analaboka," meaning "may your father be burnt," would instantly cause the startled animal to fly off at its full speed, and run a distance of several hundred yards, when, satisfied at being beyond the reach of the stick or imprecation, it would quietly turn off the road into some shady spot, or perhaps a corn-field, and there feast complacently, totally regardless of its rider, till aroused by the near approach of its comrades.

It was on such distressing occasions that the

wrath and terror of the Captain were fully manifested. He begged, implored, and threatened by turns, to induce the muleteer to seize hold of his obstinate steed, and allow him to dismount. He had never been in a saddle before in his life, and had oppresive presentiments of fractured limbs and disjointed necks, and candidly stated that he preferred walking, being simple enough to suppose that the rest of the party would consent to be broiled and fagged to death, by lingering and dallying on the road because he could not manage his own stubborn donkey. This difficulty was terminated by the Captain running a race with his ass for the rest of the journey, which was favourable to our onward progress towards the Holy City.

Never, in the whole course of my journeyings, did I suffer so much from intense heat and thirst as on that memorable day. Not a breath of air was stirring, not even enough to move the topmost branches of the loftiest trees. The very sparrows, those most noisy and quarrelsome of the feathered tribe, seemed to think chirruping too fatiguing for such sultry weather, and stood panting in shady nooks and within stony niches. The

detestably ugly bloodsucker, with its coat of mail, lay stretched out on the most exposed and fiery stones, inhaling, with evident gusto, the scorching atmosphere. A flame-coloured vapour rose up from the earth, and the sand and pebbles cracked under the horses' hoofs. Flies, and bees, and wasps kept up a continual buzz in lazy circles round our heads; but with this exception, and the measured tramp of men and horses, not a sound was heard to interrupt the painful stillness that reigned around us. The silence and consuming heat excited the most disagreeable sensations; and it seemed as though some mighty convulsion of nature were about to ensue—a deluge or an earthquake; and as though all things living and created, from the creeping ant to the gigantic oak, had suspended the exercise of their functions, and were awaiting the coming event. The sun, in his fierce and hot wrath, alone appeared, with scorching looks, to defy all else in nature. This distressing interval was interrupted by a sudden noise, like a heavy fall, which made the very earth to shake around us; and looking back, I beheld the baggage-mule sprawling on the ground, with all its load of boxes, pots, and pans scattered

around. A little Frenchman of our party was full of wrath at the loss of a Parisian hat, sadly mauled and damaged by the accident. I was too harassed by our march to laugh, and my lips were so dry that they cracked on attempting to smile. I beckoned to the muleteer, and whispered, "water." He grinned like a devil rejoicing over a lost spirit, and pointing with his chin in the direction we were going, gave me to understand that there was water within a few yards' distance. This intelligence revived my spirits, and we proceeded with all practicable speed; but half an hour, and an hour elapsed, and there was still no water. I beckoned to the villain again, and repeating my question, received the same grin and reply, with an additional "han han!" a kind of monosyllable, which is not to be found in an Arabic dictionary, but is commonly used as confirmative of the truth of an assertion. I am not naturally bloodthirsty, but I really think that, at that moment, I could almost have borne to see that muleteer put to slow torture, for the oft-repeated deceptions he practised on our too credulous minds. This indeed he deserved, for not having forewarned us of the scarcity of water, and for not

providing a remedy in the shape of a goat-skin bottle, so much in use all over Syria.

But everything finite is at length reached, and so at last were the end of our sufferings. Shade and water, refreshment and repose, were at length procured, and we encamped under shelter of an old ruined wall, out of the sun-baked mortar and stone of which a moderately sized tree had perseveringly grown and thriven. Here thirst and heat and fatigue, and even the wrath-inciting stubbornness of our quadruped companions, were speedily forgotten; and in the luxury of stones for pillows, and fig-leaves for our canopy, sleep, soft and soothing, crept speedily over us; and nothing indicated the existence of angry, tired travellers save an occasional snore. We slept, and the muleteers slept, and the very beasts of burden dozed, for want of other occupation; for grass and all things green, had long since been scorched up, and nothing but baked stones and still hotter sand remained in this wilderness.

An hour's sound, uninterrupted sleep did much towards enabling us to undergo the toil of what remained of our journey; and when we awoke, the noontide sun had waxed fainter in his

strength. A small, still zephyr, the forerunner of the pleasant evening breeze, played softly about our fevered faces; the bird and insect world were busy buzzing and darting with more lively bounds around; and nature seemed reviving from her deep and languid depression. Just as we were about to make a fresh start, our attention was attracted to the endless flight of birds that passed over our heads, flying in perpetual progressive circles. These birds, called by the Arabs "Hadji Leg-legs" (probably from the similitude this name bears to the cry they utter), are well known over the East, for the punctual regularity with which, at appointed seasons, they pass over the country twice a year on their flight eastward and back again. By a remarkable coincidence, the season of their arrival in their progress eastwards, exactly corresponds with that of the pilgrims bound for Mecca, at least the pilgrims invariably find them assembled about Mecca when they arrive; and their return is invariably preceded by large squadrons of these birds repassing on their homeward flight. Hence, all who profess the Mahometan faith look upon them with extreme reverence; and by the Arab traditions, these "leg-

legs" are supposed to be the spirits of worldly-minded Turks, who, having neglected in this life to visit the Prophet's tomb, are subjected to a perpetual pilgrimage in the shape and form of very ugly and unseemly cranes. Hence, also, this honourable title of "Hadji" is prefixed to their names; and they are seldom molested or interrupted in the fields where they alight and rest for the night. In towns or villages, situated on mountain ranges or lofty hills, and inhabited principally by Christians and fellahs, such as the Lebanon Range, the Taurus, &c., where legions of "hadji leg-legs" pass over within range of musket-balls, small respect is paid to their sacred character, and numbers fall victims to the clumsy long-barrelled fowling-pieces of the natives. Farmers and landholders, however, hold them in great estimation for the invaluable service they render in clearing fields and vineyards of rats and destructive vermin, that infest such places, and would for no consideration allow them to be disturbed whilst lodged on their domains. They progress but slowly through the air, owing to their singular method of flight, viz., that of wheeling in the air in progressive circles. At the same instant

that we came in sight of the minarets, which rose around the far-famed Temple of Solomon, we watched a large flight of these birds leisurely alight on the plains that surround the walls of Jerusalem.

Here, then, was the city that was promised unto Abraham, and his successive generations; and here that great nation, now the most degraded and persecuted on the face of the earth, had once dwelt in unrivalled splendour and glory. Here the great Queen of Sheba had come laden with the richest spoils of the East, to hear uttered by his own lips the parables and wise sayings of the greatest and most profound of philosophers, and the most powerful potentate of her day. Here, after years of labour and toil, had that magnificent temple been erected, and dedicated to the service of that God whose long-promised Son, the Redeemer of the world, had been rejected and scorned by the hardened and blinded Israelites. On this spot had that Redeemer prophesied the fall and destruction of the city, and of her most beautiful Temple; and here, on the ruins of that very Temple, the proud followers of Mahomet had erected a mosque, from whose lofty minaret the call to prayer resounded

far and wide, as we entered the gates of the modern Jerusalem. The striking words of the amiable Heber, in his Ode to Jerusalem flashed across my mind, as I looked on the wreck of what had been :

> "Reft of thy sons, amidst thy foes forlorn,
> Mourn, widowed Queen, forgotten Zion, mourn.
> Is this thy place, sad city, this thy throne?
> Where the wild desert rears it craggy stone."

I was but a child when I read that poem, and for many years it had lain forgotten amid the chaos of crowded events ; but the picture it drew was now before me, and instantly recalled the words.

At about four P.M., our cavalcade drew up before the spacious Latin convent, where we dismounted, and were about to have our baggage at once taken into the commodious hall, when, to our chagrin, we were told that this could not be done till our respective passports had been inspected by the Superior of the convent. Now, as I had resided for some years in Syria, and had been living with many of my friends and relatives, passing to and fro without sign or countersign, my original passport had long since been lost ; and an

European passport is never sought for, or required by the local Turkish authorities. Every traveller is obliged to carry a Turkish "teskera" or certificate, serving at the same time as passport and bill of health, and I was certainly *en règle* on this score. But the convent would afford hospitable cheer to none that possessed not a regular passport, or in lieu thereof, a certificate from his Consul. I had, therefore, no alternative but to procure a guide, and forthwith proceed to this officer.

I directed the man to take me to the Consulate, and strained my eyes to distinguish, as we pushed our way along the dirty streets, the well-known *tableau* of that rampant and never-ceasing contest between an angry lion and malicious unicorn, the sight of which gives courage to British travellers in tribulation or distress throughout the world, being ever met with over the thresholds of her Majesty's faithful consular servants' dwellings. My guide, however, brought me, to my astonishment, to the new Protestant cathedral. I naturally supposed that he must have misunderstood me, and remonstrated accordingly, but he persisted that he was right, and so, as the result

proved, he was; for the Consular Office is actually included in the building which forms the new cathedral, an arrangement hit upon, I imagine, to frustrate the Turks in the innumerable and annoying pretences they resorted to for delaying and interrupting the progress of the building during its construction. I had arrived on a Sunday, and the office was not only closed, but the Consul himself was absent at some village, a few hours' distant from Jerusalem, so that there was nothing left for me, but to seek for the nearest house of rest, whether it should be the abode of Turks or Christians.

This was no easy matter. There were locandas and hotels not a few, with quaint and classic designations in large bold letters fixed over the door: but, alas for my entry into Jerusalem! these also were shut, and the innkeepers were in like manner out of town. After a great deal of searching and inquiring, and a vast deal of walking into the bargain, I happily encountered a long-bearded German, who could speak enough Italian to make me understand that a heretic Frenchman, who had more tongue than religion, had not only just opened a very fine locanda, but was actually at

that present moment not twenty yards in advance of me. So I shouted to him in French, and he quickly responded. Putting myself under his guidance, I was in a very few minutes safely lodged in his really comfortable hotel, and might almost immediately have been seen partaking of what I had most on earth wished for, a glass of pale ale. For the guidance of travellers, I here insert a copy, *verbatim et literatim*, of the card that my garrulous host forced into my hands as soon as I could attend to him; and in doing so, I can with sincerity say, that both Monsieur and Madame were extremely kind and obliging, and that the lodging and fare was, considering the locality, unexceptionable—

HOTEL DE PALMIR,

TENU

PAR STEFANO BARRY,

A

JERUSALEM.

The Hotel de Palmir is situated within a few yards of the Jaffa gate of Jerusalem, and in the cleanest but narrowest street. The people

living opposite could have looked into the dining-room, had it not been for the trellis-work in the windows, which was to them a source of infinite annoyance, for they were about the most inquisitive people on the face of the earth, and as noisy and chattering as a troop of monkeys or a flock of parroquets. Who they were, or what they came for, or why they remained in Jerusalem, where only a limited number can find occupation, were questions I was wholly incapable of solving. One thing appeared certain, that if their original advent had been brought about by religious motives they had sadly deviated from the right path, for they lacked a fundamental Christian virtue—charity. The first evening of my arrival being Sunday, and an idle day, they had congregated, I imagine, at the residence of some mutual friend, to smoke, and waste breath and time in the pleasant process of pulling their neighbours to pieces. The language spoken was Italian, but from the various intonations and idioms, I had no difficulty in discovering that Germans and Frenchmen, and even a few speakers of Arab origin, were among the party. "Where is so and so?" asked one in a tone of peculiar interest.

"O! un Birbanti! un Ladroni!" was the charitable reply; and the man who answered, forthwith launched into a tale of ills and wrongs, practised and suffered by the person in question, stopping at every other word to find some appropriate invective to give due force to his censures.

I was in the innocent enjoyment of a veritable cup of Mocha coffee and the fumes of real *Sheraz Timbac* (a weed resembling tobacco, which is only smoked in the *Narghili* or *Hooka*), when, to my great amusement, I perceived that the conversation having been worn to a shred, the attention of these heterogeneous pilgrims was directed towards no less a personage than my humble self. They wondered who I was, and why I had come at this unseasonable time of the year. Was I a General or a Consul-General? a gentleman or a Goth? a merchant or a swindler? Mine host had evidently, in the exuberance of his spirits at having picked up a customer when least expected, officially announced from the back door of the hotel that he did not exactly know who I was; but that if I were not an important

public officer, I must be the son or brother of one, or some great *incognito* travelling for political purposes. Nor was this difficult of belief, as it is a common opinion that every man calling himself an Englishman must be a kind of locomotive mint or bank, on which innkeepers, in common with Jews and shopkeepers, are in duty bound to draw as largely as their bankrupt consciences will permit. My neighbours were in a state verging on distraction to discover my true character; and they, I am certain, would have cheerfully given a shilling a head only just to get a sight of me for a minute. What is he like? has no one seen him? is he tall or short, thin or stout? To these various questions a libelling old Jew who was passing in the street took upon himself to reply.

"Mashalla," said he, "I never saw a bigger man in my life: two camels could hardly support the weight of the Tartarawan which brought him here," a description to which I could lay no claim.

To continue to be such an object of discussion among a set of people who varied so vastly in their opinions except in one point, viz., that of

deciding that if I were not this or that, I must be an impostor, became at length anything but agreeable, and I retreated to bed. The last words I heard as I turned on my pillow, and dozed off, were "Chi diabilo e questo voiegitoro, si non e uno diplomato deve esser un birbante."

CHAPTER VII.

THE RELICS OF JERUSALEM.

The Temple of Solomon—The Holy Sepulchre—Armenian superstition—Celestial fire—Priestly imposition—Pilate's Judgment Hall—Greek women—Story of a treacherous husband—Protestant Cathedral—The English Consul—The Dead Sea, Jordan, and Bethlehem — Advice to travellers.

ALL will remember that descriptive passage in the first Book of Kings: "And the house which King Solomon built for the Lord, the length thereof was threescore cubits, and the breadth thereof twenty cubits, and the height thereof thirty cubits .... And the cedar of the house within was carved, with kuofs and open flowers; all was cedar; there was no stone

seen . . . . And the oracle in the forepart was twenty cubits in length, and twenty cubits in breadth, and twenty cubits in the height thereof: and he overlaid it with pure gold; and so covered the altar which was of cedar . . . . And the whole house he overlaid with gold until he had finished all the house."

Such was the magnificence of the Temple of Solomon, which must have almost rivalled in Oriental splendour the ideal palaces so often alluded to in the marvellous tales of the Thousand and One Nights. Alas! not only does no vestige of this unequalled structure remain, but the cunning and skilful workmen of those days—the masons that came from Tyre at King Hiram's command, the architects, the builders, the carvers in cedar and other woods, the workers in beautifully wrought gold and silver, might vainly be sought for amongst the degenerate artizans of Syria and Palestine. I found it a difficult task, nay, an utter impossibility, to reconcile to my mind the astounding fact, that the very ordinary common-place looking Turkish town, filled with soldiers and Jews, Arabs and Greeks, Armenians and Syrians, and merchants, shopkeepers and shorn

priests, whose streets and bazaars were so ill constructed, and as crowded with beggars and miserable-looking dogs as ever were the streets of Damascus or Aleppo, or any other town in the Turkish dominions, could actually be the very Jerusalem, the same majestic Holy City, of which I had so often from earliest childhood read and dreamed. It was difficult to separate the reality from the ideal, yet I knew there could be no possible doubt as to my being actually on the very spot where the greatest boon of mercy had been bestowed upon mankind—the great work of Redemption completed, though everything about and around me was purely of a very modern date. I asked for the Temple, and the finger of my guide pointed to a minaret. I thought that at least the Holy Sepulchre, hewn out of a rock, would be aloof from the busy hum and infidel touch of the Gentile races that thronged the street; but, on the contrary, it was situated in the very centre of the noisest and most crowded part of the city. Here venders of every kind of saleable article drove, to all appearances, a thriving trade. The speculative hadji, not long since returned from Mecca, was making ample amends for the

hardships endured in his pilgrimage, in the profits yielded him by the sale of his coloured beads, and fans, and spices, oil of roses, and sandalwood, all articles much in demand amongst the *Humum* (vapour-bath) going ladies of the various Turkish harems. Long-bearded Jews were squabbling with money-changers about the intrinsic value and weight of Turkish gold coins which had been undergoing in their hard grip that scientific process vulgarly called sweating, *i. e.*, being placed in some terrifically strong acid, whereby about a farthing's-worth of gold-dust was gained upon a sovereign. Old women were selling sweetmeats, in form and colour not unlike the misshapen clay pellets that ragged children in dirty puddles are addicted to on a rainy day. Meagre dogs were engaged in deadly conflict over some well-gnawed bone. Men and women and children of all nations, and in every costume of the Levant, were laughing and talking and quarrelling, while camel-drivers in sheep-skin cloaks, old and filthy, brushed by you rather too closely for your personal comfort. The heat of the day and the clouds of tormenting flies, added to the busy scenes of life, barter and of uproar, effectually dismantled the place of sacred

associations, and made it still more difficult to believe that this spot was, beyond all contradiction, the site of that greatest of all great miracles, the vanquishing of death and its thousand terrors.

I had hardly a wish to enter into the precincts of the building. Whilst I looked on it from without, there might still remain some faint ideal semblance of the wonderful and surpassing sanctity of the place, but of the interior I had little expectations. Still I could hardly retrace my steps from the very threshold of what millions had, for ages past, undergone every privation to visit, without first entering; and so I followed my guide through the porch. I saw all that others have so often seen, and what so many writers have but too truly described. I beheld the very tomb of Him that had been led like a lamb to the slaughter, and I stooped down and reverently kissed the stones that encompassed that most hallowed spot on earth. And then I saw how the sepulchre had been defiled by superstition, I looked upon the contrivances of hollow and deceitful priestcraft, designed to impose upon the ignorant credulity of the Greek and the Armenian Churches. Crowds of fanatics annually flock hither to light their candles at what they

conceive to be a celestial flame, and, in the press, thousands have been trodden down and squeezed to death. Yet the impudent imposition, still fully in practice, can be instantly detected!

I was never present in Jerusalem at the celebration of Easter myself, but Dr. Esperon, who had often been an eye-witness, informed me that after the celebration of high mass, the Greek Patriarch or Bishop, accompanied by a Turkish authority, descends into the sepulchre, in the centre of which there is a small opening through which a taper can be inserted. When the crowd is in the height of excitement and expectation, their attention is suddenly drawn off by the prayers and exclamations of the numerous priests and lay-brothers; a simultaneous rush is then made towards the sepulchre, and in the confusion that ensues to secure the nearest places, a sudden noise like the rumbling of distant thunder is heard; the Patriarch lights his candle by the aid of a lucifer match, and thrusts it adroitly through the crevice in the tomb: at that instant cries of "the fire, the holy fire has fallen!" resound through the place. The pilgrims light their candles, and from their candles others again are

lit, and so till the whole place is in a perfect blaze of illumination; and this is the main object in view with Greek and Armenian pilgrims. As for the candles thus lit, they are very soon afterwards extinguished, and they remain as relics, prized above all others. Each man is generally provided with half a dozen candles, and when he returns to his village and his home, these are the most precious trophies he has to produce. They are a kind of diploma, which entitles him to prefix the honourable distinction of *Moxy* or *Hadjii* to his name. They are lit and held over his head, and over his bride, when he is married; they serve as tapers at the baptism of his children; when extinguished, they are hung over the threshold of his door, and serve as a safeguard against all evil intruders, and goblins, and ghosts; and when eventually he sets forth on his last earthly pilgrimage, and sickness, and pain, and trembling, and sorrow are the sole companions of his dread journey, then the priest will hold up the remains of these relics before his already half-glazed eye, and they cheer and support him in his gloomy passage through the valley of the shadow of death. The last service these candles

render, is when, once more lit, they are carefully placed at the head and the feet of him who shall never see light again; and here they burn lower and lower through the long hours of the night till they expire.

I really believe that the great mass of Greek and Armenian pilgrims visit the Holy City from purely religious motives; and they imagine that the greatest boon conferred upon themselves and their children is the privilege of being enabled to do so. I have known poor peasants who could hardly subsist on their daily earnings, and who at best managed to live but from hand to mouth, stint themselves of many of the commonest necessaries of life, in order that they might lay by a sufficient sum to enable them to reach the sepulchre of the Redeemer. But it requires long and undeviating perseverance to accomplish this end, for a pilgrimage to Jerusalem is to them a costly undertaking, not so much from the personal expense attendant on the journey, as from the money extorted from them in the shape of free-will offerings, which are presented to the priesthood for the nominal purpose of supporting the numerous shrines and

churches dedicated to saints and apostles and defunct patriarchs.

The Syrian Greek women are particularly strict and scrupulous in the performance of all the slightest rites and ceremonies connected with their creed, and there is nothing they delight in more than frequent pilgrimages to Jerusalem. I was intimately acquainted with one old lady in Scanderoon, who was passionately given to the rigid observance of fasts and saints' days. Poor, amiable old creature! in her own rights, as far as age and ugliness were concerned, she ought to have been enrolled and canonized as a saint herself, years before she bestowed her virgin heart upon the worldly-minded man she had been wedded to; but hers had been a love match—a pure love match—as far, at least, as regarded her part in it. How else could she have been brought to love and obey a husband almost young enough to be her son, and to endow him with all her worldly riches? —which, by the way, were very considerable for such a place as Scanderoon. Her husband held a high official post, and was looked up to and reverenced by his fever-stricken townsmen as a

very great personage. He was head interpreter to the factors for the merchants of Aleppo residing at Scanderoon, which brought him in frequent communication with the local Turkish authorities, giving him great influence in the town. He was a sufferer from the local tertian-ague; and at the time I made his acquaintance, had passed what I should term the prime of life, and was withering rather rapidly on a sapless trunk. The lady was certainly on the shady side of fifty. As she had married him for love, he, of course, had married her for gain, and neither had any right to complain of a want of affectionate regard. Unhappily no offspring had blessed their union; and this was a sad slur upon them in an Oriental country, where married people are expected to have a quiver full of children. The husband bore up gallantly against the misfortune, but not so the wife. She grew very melancholy on the subject, till one day she luckily bethought her of Sarah and her old age, and the result was an immediate pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Whether she expected to meet heavenly messengers, and come back and populate the village with her progeny, I am unable to state distinctly; but I am pretty certain she entertained some very sanguine

expectations. Be this as it may, the conduct of her husband was handsome in the extreme. He spared no expense to get her away, when, in a sympathetic strain of feeling, he bethought himself of Abraham and Hagar, and was comforted in perspective by a handmaid who might console him, in case of accident, for the loss of his saintly wife. After a few months, however, Madame returned, though with evident symptoms of having been very much shaken by sea and land journeyings. With the exception of this event, nothing occurred to interrupt the monotony of their lives. Summer, with its attendant fevers, came and went, leaving the old lady much improved in health, to the great annoyance of the disappointed husband. Autumn, when leaves fall, and broken constitutions gather up their legs and give up the race of life, seemed to bring new strength to the venerable plant; and instead of wintry winds congealing the blood in her veins, they seemed nearly to bring back her bloom. The husband was almost driven to distraction; and the poor handmaid destined, he had foolishly and fondly hoped, to succeed his aged partner in his household, became more beautiful from day to day, drawing suitors by scores to her

feet—fine, handsome, robust young fellows, who were dangerous rivals at any period of life, and more so in its decline. But the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and the overpowering love of gold, were worshipped even in such a place as Scanderoon; and who could compare with the great Turjoman in regard to wealth or distinction.

The season again came round, and by force of argument, in which the priest, who was bribed, strenuously joined, the good old woman was persuaded to set forth on a second religious expedition. The weather proved tempestuous and rainy. The pilgrims were rocked to and fro on the ocean, and suffered from innumerable ills by land. Even fever raged amongst them; and children and hale young persons were stricken by the malady and speedily succumbed. Tidings of these mishaps reached the ears of the anxious husband, who caused a requiem to be chanted in the Greek church; for perhaps, as he feelingly observed, his poor wife might chance to be amongst the number departed. The old lady, however, had no such intention at that time, and in due course she was restored to the arms of her Benedict,

having accomplished the journey in safety. Fear and suffering had, however, left indelible marks on her now deeply furrowed face and wasted frame. Number three is universally acknowledged to possess a mystic character; and a third pilgrimage could, the husband thought, scarcely fail to be productive of beneficial results. Accordingly it was duly undertaken, but, alas for the shortsightedness of mortals! the pilgrim had hardly reached the Holy City, when a direful pestilence broke out in Scanderoon, and the Turjoman, so impatient for the departure of his wife, was amongst the first that found a resting-place in the swampy burial-ground of the Greek church. The maiden who had fondly hoped to revel in the enjoyment of his riches, wept tears of disappointment, and bestowed her fair hand on the first bold youth that offerred marriage. And the old widow, who has fairly established her claim to canonization, has put off the time for assuming those honours *sine die*, intending to enjoy the unlimited control of her earthly possessions, without further exposure to peril or discomfort, so long as life shall remain.

Such is my experience of the ignorant bigotry

of the poor Greek women, who are subjects of a Turkish sovereign; but what will the reader say when I mention as a fact, that enlightened and educated Europeans have even surpassed them in their absurd fanaticism, with regard to the interpretation of Scripture passages relative to the present and future state of Jerusalem? A very ludicrous incident occurred not many years past. Two reverends were travelling through Palestine: one was a very clever man, well known to all Europe; his companion was a stranger who had worked himself up to a pitch almost verging on insanity, from deep studies of the Prophecies and Revelations. They were accompanied by a skilful draughtsman, whose duty it was to make sketches of the noted towns and villages through which they passed. One day while Mr. de C——, the draughtsman, was occupied in making a sketch of the Mount of Olives, he was interrupted and annoyed by the ludicrous sight of the Rev. stranger rushing up the hill at the top of his speed without hat or spectacles (both of which he had lost in running), shouting loudly, and waving his hands to Mr. de C—— to make all possible haste in preparing drawing materials for the pur-

pose of drawing what proved to be an invisible picture.

"There it is," he cried; "the New City—the New City of the Bride! don't you see it in the clouds?"

But these incoherent exclamations, uttered at the top of his voice by the breathless missionary, gave way to excessive wrath when he found Mr. de C—— quite unable to distinguish even one faint outline of the glorious picture conjured up by his heated imagination. Mr. de C—— is still in the East, and can vouch for the truth of this anecdote.

After a minute survey of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, and the pictures and relics, crosses and rosaries, of several other churches and convents, and with a small boy's-load of sanctified soap (like bits of bad cheese), mother-o'-pearl shells friars' beads, crosses, and candles, and little tin cannisters of holy water, which were carefully sealed to prevent imposition, I retraced my steps to my landlord's, of the Tadmor or Palmyra Hotel, and hinted that tiffin would be acceptable. But tiffin was Hebrew to mine host, though the more intelligible term "lunch" soon procured me sup-

plies; and, after a smoke and short siesta, which my fatigue rendered necessary, I found myself in fit condition to pay a visit to our Consul, and present my credentials, in the shape of a letter of introduction.

The Consulate, as already observed, is situated in the body of the new Protestant Cathedral; and I found Mr. Finn, the Consul, seated in his office. The amiable qualities of this gentleman are too well known to need description here, and my pen could give but a very insufficient record of his excellence, though in gratitude for the many kindnesses shown me during my sojourn at Jerusalem, I cannot pass it by in silence. One may, indeed, travel over many a long mile of this bleak and uncharitable world before meeting his equal, either as regards his official capacity or his private worth as a gentleman and friend.

The cathedral is a beautiful structure, and stands out strikingly from amongst the uncouth specimens of Ottoman architecture that surround it. During the Easter season, I was told that the congregation occasionally amounted to nearly three hundred souls, Protestants by baptism, birth, or inclination. The Bishop and his pastors have a

hard field to labour in; for Moslem, Greek, Armenian, Marionite, and Fellah, and especially the Jews, are so difficult of conviction in a creed so palpably differing from their own ideas and traditions, that it would indeed apparently be easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for them to embrace the Protestant faith. However, this ministry is one not to be abandoned, and success will be a rich reward to the most toilsome labours.

Amongst the many places I visited, as being connected with sacred or ancient history, was the site of Pilate's Hall, pointed out to me with as much assurance as if my informant spoke from personal recollection. But I shall not stop to describe these places, which, however interesting they may be to some, I considered as of a very apocryphal character.

It would be a difficult task to give anything like a correct census of the inhabitants or population of Jerusalem, because, with very few exceptions, it consists of a migratory people, wandering upon the face of the earth. Jews and Jewesses, who, in their excessive old age, arrive, and perhaps survive their arrival a day, a week, or a

month or two at the furthest; pilgrims, who either die, or stay but a short time; travellers of every European nation; Turkish authorities, subject to annual removal; doctors, merchants, shopkeepers, pedlars, and publicans, whose stay is entirely dependent upon the success of their speculative schemes. Those who may be reckoned amongst the permanent inhabitants are first, the missionaries and clergy of every creed, who seldom remove anywhere unless it be to the other world; and secondly, the mendicants, who derive a thriving trade in charity, among strangers and pilgrims, both of whom, if anything in this world will dispose them to be compassionate, yield to the emotion on this sacred spot.

Jerusalem, as may be supposed, has but little commerce. People are more disposed, while here, to repent hard bargains than to make them, though nevertheless some few individuals there are, who set conscience and its low, still voice at defiance, and feel little or no regret at making you pay one hundred per cent. above value for a badly-imitated pot of "Warren's jet blacking." Jaffa supplies the principal wants of the markets; and grey domestics, as well as grey patriarchs, are

to be seen in the bazaars. Egypt sends rice, and the surrounding villages cattle and wheat. Broad-cloths have been known to come from Caipha to form winding-sheets for such as may require that least agreeable of all human necessities.

Petrified olives have been collected in large quantities near Jerusalem, and in the country round Beyrout; and these, when slit, form rare and curious pavements for the terraces of the wealthier Jews. Some of these have been shipped to Europe for the same purpose, and I was informed that the first speculator in this article amassed a considerable fortune.

There is one feature in Jerusalem, or rather amongst its migratory and stationary population, which strikes forcibly those who have frequented and dwelt in other towns under the Ottoman jurisdiction; and that is the species of strange solemnity which protrudes itself in every action, word, and deed of the Orientals. You ask a man the way to any given street or house; and he answers you with a solemn flourish of the hand, like a ghost alluding to a tombstone. You inquire the news of the day; and the answer is sure to be some recent miracle performed by the finger of a

saint, greatly celebrated for curing every human ill. You propose a walk, and your friend or guide leads you to a church or cemetery, as full of gloomy records as the space can register. Music would soothe your mind, or lull sorrowful reflections, and a requiem is forthwith chanted — a veritable dirge! sung only as Syrians can sing. But remember, this refers only to the native Christians, and perhaps some of the Jews. The rifraff, Ionian and Maltese cut-throats and renegades, sing comic songs upon the tomb-stones of saints, and dance polkas and jigs where only prayer should be heard. Example, however, has a due effect even amongst these wretches, though on dark nights, when they imagine themselves secure and unobserved, some of them indulge in the greatest atrocities.

So much has been said of Jerusalem, the Jordan, and the Holy Villages, in prose and verse, from the earliest ages to the present time, that it would be presumption on my part to attempt to enter into any elaborate description of them. Suffice it to say, that I visited them all, the Dead Sea, Jordan, Bethlehem, and the other places noted in Sacred Writ; and having once done so, I

must candidly confess that it would require a very urgent motive indeed ever to induce me to repeat the visit—at least, unless some miraculous changes were effected in the climate, the method of travelling, and the nature of these countries and their inhabitants. Most true is it, that it is a great satisfaction to know that I have been there, and that I have undergone all the miseries and sufferings of such an expedition; but further than this, I have no bright recollections of pleasant scenes, or happy hours, experienced during my tour. Parching heat and intolerable thirst, the dusty wilderness, stumbling and jaded horses, the vain shelter of tents, the by no means vain stings of fleas, flies, and their coadjutors and accomplices; the fights with muleteers, and the impositions of divers hirelings, make up the sum of my recollections, to which I may add a fever I caught by bathing in the Jordan, and which has clung to me till my safe arrival home—a favour seldom accorded to other Europeans similarly situated, as they are almost invariably, and in a very few days, relieved from their torments by death.

I may here be permitted to offer a few words of advice to young and inexperienced travellers in

Palestine. Young men fresh from college, and ever accustomed to one of the most healthy climates in the world, forget on reaching the East that they have there to contend with many hitherto unknown evils, and vainly imagine that they can engage in the same violent exercise, and in some cases excesses, which they were wont with impunity to indulge in at home. Hence, they over-heat and over-exert themselves; their main object in prosecuting their travels apparently being a wish to accomplish a long journey in as short a space as is practicable, and they gallop over parched plains and scorched mountain-passes during the very hottest hours of the sultriest day. They encamp or bivouac when overcome with fatigue and heat under the cool shade of some umbrageous tree, where the insidious breeze tempts them, heated and perspiring though they be, to throw off their coats and heavier garments, and revel momentarily in the luxury of shirt-sleeves tucked up to the elbow, and shirt-collars thrown carelessly open; while others, unable to resist the temptation offered by some river or stream, plunge in its waters, and in the temporal enjoyment of its refreshing coolness, forget the

many serious consequences that may, and, in almost every instance, do inevitably ensue. Go and look over the thickly set tombstones in the churchyard attached to the American Mission Chapel at Beyrout, and every third stone will mark the early doom of some thoughtless young man, who from want of common care in diet, in exercise, and in exposure to a climate ever baneful to English constitutions, has paid a heavy tribute indeed for imprudence and sheer thoughtlessness.

In travelling in Syria and Palestine persons should adapt themselves as much as lie in their power to the customs of the native inhabitants: mark for instance the wary carefulness with which a Turk will set out on ever so short a journey. His head is carefully enveloped in the folds of a white turban, with, maybe, a *Boshéa* or large silk handkerchief tied loosely over it, and his body is enveloped, during the hottest weather, in cloaks and *Meshlahs*, a species of light over-all. The hotter the weather, the more numerous will be these coverings; and the result is, that however fierce the rays of the sun may be, they become impotent before reaching his skin. The Turk never suffers from that scorching feverish heat

to which Europeans are exposed by their lighter clothing; and when he rests under some cool and inviting shade, in place of stripping off his many apparently superfluous coats, he will in all probability put on an additional one, and wait till the circulation is restored to its natural flow. Then and only then will he commence, and that by degrees, to divest himself of cloaks and coats, so that he has nothing to fear from any sudden check caused by too hasty exposure to the air. Then mark his diet: frugal in the extreme, during the heat of the day. At sunrise he will content himself with a small cup of coffee and an atom of bread, or perhaps a bowl of fresh milk; at mid-day or thereabouts he stops for his breakfast, a few dried fruits, a piece of a water-melon, and another small cup of coffee will satisfy his cravings; and he then waits till night-fall, and when he has fairly encamped for the night, and placed everything in its proper position, his horse, his bed, his saddle-bags, his pipe, he bestirs himself about his dinner. If good meat be procurable in the village where he finds himself, he buys it: if not, a fowl, and with stewed flesh and boiled rice, he makes one good and hearty meal, after which

he washes his hands and feet, performs his orisons, smokes a meditative pipe, and then tucks himself up in his bed, wisely determined to sleep in spite of the invading army of fleas which are only waiting the signal of his lying down to commence a general attack. But Turks and Asiatics are accustomed to fleas from their earliest youth, and their stings are to them in every sense a mere fleabite, besides which Nature and the climate they inhabit have rendered their skins almost invulnerable; and by early dawn they are up again and doing, as fresh and as lively as larks. Ill-health is among them scarcely known, and they seldom or never fall victims to those fevers which are so fatal to our own countrymen. Let the English traveller watch how the Turk journeys; and the best advice I can offer him is, "Go thou and do likewise."

We are told in Acts, that "the angel of the Lord spake unto Philip, saying, Arise, and go towards the south unto the way that goeth down from Jerusalem unto Gaza, which is desert; and he arose and went." I followed in the track of Philip's footsteps, and the road and the country were still desert. I crossed the stream in which the eunuch

from Ethiopia had been baptized—and *I*, a solitary traveller, stricken with fever and weakness and fatigue, with many a mile betwixt myself and anything approaching to civilization, despite the warnings of my servant and muleteer, and contrary to the small, still whispers of prudence, *I* bathed in this very stream, and most strange to say, suffered no harm by my temerity. I reached Gaza on the afternooon of the second day, and being pretty well tired of the discomforts attending land travelling, gladly availed myself of the opportunity offered by a small Arab felucca, which was to sail direct for Caipha the evening after my arrival. The Reis, or Captain, of this boat was summoned into the awful presence of the quarantine authorities, and amongst other stipulations the wretch entered into, there was one special item, viz., that the boat should carry no other passengers besides myself and my servant. "*Allah Rassi* (by my head), it shall be as you desire," was his oft-repeated asseveration, notwithstanding which, however, when no remedy for the evil could be suggested, and no aid procured, I found, to my vexation, on arriving at the water's edge, and stepping on board the felucca, that it

was so full of passengers of divers genders, ay, and nations, that I must fain content myself with a very small space, and with my knees nearly touching my nose, suffer martyrdom during the whole passage. Men, women, and children were forced to sit so long in such queer positions, that their limbs became almost useless from cramp, and a few old women roared again with anguish, as they were ever and anon seized with agonising pangs, the tortures of which they had no means of alleviating or getting rid of, till we should touch *terra firma* again. The beauty and serenity of the night contrasted strangely with our own personal feelings: I was alternately a prey to excessive pain and excessive wrath. The breeze swept mildly along the surface of the ocean, and there was just sufficient wind to put the little boat to her utmost speed as she skimmed lightly over the unruffled waters. The only discordant sounds that interrupted the stillness of the night, were the groans of the suffering passengers, and occasional gruff snatches of some Syrian nautical air, which the Reis indulged in at intervals of about every ten minutes. It was long past midnight ere slumber visited my eyes, but at last I went off into as

sound a sleep as ever mortal enjoyed; and when I opened my eyes again, it was to discover, to my infinite delight, that the distance had been run, and that the felucca, which was not much bigger than a ship's long-boat, was carefully beached in a secure sandy spot, just under the dilapidated walls of the little town of Caipha.

CHAPTER VIII.

CAIPHA AND MOUNT CARMEL.

Caipha—The rising town—Character of the population—Struggle for lighters—Ludicrous situation of an English Captain—Description of the scenery—Disappointment—The Custom House—A Syrian Casino.

THE modern town, or, more properly speaking village, of Caipha, is situated close to the water's edge, and within half an hour's walk of the rocky pathway which leads up to the Deyer of Mar Elias, a convent perched on the most conspicuous point of the far-famed Mount Carmel. The ruins of the ancient city are still to bé seen, but its position could never have been so eligible for commercial purposes as that of the new and thriving town.

Not four years ago, Caipha was an insignificant fishing village, with a population of little more than two hundred souls, and resorted to only by small Arab boats, or vessels that sought protection from the inclemency of the weather in its safe and commodious harbour. At the present day its population may be reckoned at three thousand; and houses and huts cannot be fast enough constructed to afford shelter to the numerous new settlers that arrive almost daily. From the middle of September up to the middle of November, 1850, a space of only two months, no less than eight English vessels, whose joint measurement amounted to about two thousand three hundred tons, loaded at Caipha eighteen thousand quarters of wheat for Falmouth and Cork alone, and besides these, there were several large Greek vessels for Bristol and the north of Ireland. Such a sudden start of trade on a gigantic scale, brought numerous speculating Arabs from the surrounding villages, who found it best suited their convenience to fix their permanent abode within the walls of Caipha itself. Every one, even the most wretched and destitute, found ample employment for themselves and families; the men and boys worked as labourers

in assisting the numerous masons employed upon new buildings; the more robust became porters and watermen; and the women and girls were actively engaged from sunrise to sundown in sifting wheat and sessame seed at the various warehouses of the merchants. Yet notwithstanding the daily influx of strangers, ready and eager to find employment, the trade grew faster upon the town than its rapidly increasing population, so that merchants and ships were absolutely at a stand-still for want of hands. The natives being well aware of the power they were thus invested with, refused to work except at the most exorbitant rates. Merchants were bound down to time by charter parties, and they had no alternative left them but to agree to these rates. I have known porters who carried sacks of wheat from a warehouse not twenty yards from the landing-place, gain as much as from thirty to forty shillings a day, a sum hardly gained by a month's labour at any other port in the Mediterranean. These creatures, who a few months before had crawled about from door to door begging a morsel of bread to appease the cravings of hunger, grew insolent in proportion as their independence increased; and I have seen Arab

merchants who were tortured out of their existence by the masters of the English vessels consigned to their houses, actually crave as a favour of these porters to carry down their grain for a sum twenty times the amount ordinarily given.

There are not more than ten available boats belonging to the port of Caipha, a number totally insufficient to supply the vessels loading, with their cargoes. I have seen as many as thirty sail at anchor at the same period, all endeavouring to complete their cargoes as speedily as they possibly could; and confusion and quarrels arising from competition, and rivalry amongst the different parties, whose interests were concerned, were not only of frequent occurrence, but productive of very serious results. The want of a British Consular Agent or Vice-Consul was much felt by the masters of the English vessels in port. Caipha was under the jurisdiction of the Vice-Consul of Acre, a Mr. Finzy, of the Hebrew persuasion, an excellent old man in his own quiet way; but having a large family and a house to support at Acre, and moreover not being in the receipt of any salary or stipendiary allowance, it ill suited either his convenience or purse to maintain a

distinct establishment at Caipha. Hence his visits to that port were very rare indeed, and only undertaken on Sundays, or when any very pressing emergency (such as the departure of an English vessel) required his immediate presence. Of a Sunday he was certain of not being mixed up in the interminable quarrels that were of hourly occurrence between British shipmasters and the skippers of Greek and foreign vessels. At other times, he terminated his business with vessels, on the point of sailing, as speedily as the case would admit of. He endorsed the articles, drew up the bill of health, pocketed the fees, and galloped back to Acre before others were aware of his proximity; consequently, there was no British authority continually on the spot to interfere, and prevent the serious disturbances that took place. And all these disturbances were to be traced to the one absorbing evil—namely, the want of a sufficient number of boats. But this is unfortunately an evil which admits of no immediate remedy, for the landing-place is entirely wedged in by rocks, having only one entrance into a little space or basin, which could never be made to contain more than four boats at

a time; therefore, until some enterprising individual can be induced to build a jetty or small breakwater, beyond this ledge of rocks, the nature of the beach forbids any hopes of amelioration. The presence, however, of a British authority, who, from his official position must needs command the respect of all parties, would be productive of incalculable service in furthering the interests of English merchants and shipmasters.

From what occurred during my stay at Caipha, I am only astonished that bloodshed and murder have not been of frequent occurrence. According to the custom established at Caipha, any man who succeeds in being the first party to deposit or empty out a sack of grain in a boat, has an indisputable right to make use of that boat for the trip; but, on its return from the ship, it is freed from this appropriation, and is again open to seizure. A most diverting sight is to see the numerous merchants, clerks, shipbrokers, and skippers, screaming out offers at the highest pitch of their voices to the unconscious boatmen, who are yet far beyond the reach of all sound. Some are perched on the bank over the Custom-house gate; others are on the landing

stairs; a few are seated on the ledge of rocks which run parallel with the town; and one or two, more hardy than the rest, are wading out into the sea, in the hope of being able to take forcible possession of the prize. Meanwhile, some twenty porters, each carrying for different warehouses, are jostling and hustling one another on the very slippery steps from which goods are embarked, each determined in his own mind to be the first to throw in the sack, or to perish in the attempt; and the sudden disappearance of a man, sack and all, who has lost his balance, and fallen into the water, is not at all a rare spectacle at Caipha. On such occasions, a fight generally ensues, at first confined to the man who fell into the water and the porter who was the cause of his mishap; and, as a natural consequence, the heavily-laden man is sure to meet a similar fate to that which he had occasioned his neighbour. Then the war becomes general. The two clerks who keep tally, and the two merchants who are shipping, and the two captains on board whose ships the lost grain was to be shipped, all fall to at once, and keep at it tooth and nail. Amidst the uproar and confusion that ensues the anxiously-expected boat

touches the land, and is instantly pounced upon by some man more wary than his neighbours, who has kept aloof from the others in some hidden nook or corner, and who rushes into the boat at the peril of his life, when, having safely deposited the bag of wheat, he proclaims his victory by shouting out the name of the lucky individual he carries for.

This law of usage was in a certain measure respected; but I saw several instances occur of its infringement. So long as Mr. Averino, the Russian Consular Agent, or any other European merchant or agent, was on the spot, it was never violated; but when these chanced to be all absent, very tumultuous scenes ensued. On one occasion, the Captain of an English barque had gained indisputable right to one of the lighters; for not only had he placed his wheat in her, but he left one of the ship's sailors to watch over his prize. Feeling himself secure on this point, he trotted into the town to hunt for porters, to carry down the wheat from his consignee's warehouse. I have already stated that the number of hands was far from meeting the demand, and porters were not only at a premium, as regarded their wages,

but they were actually obliged to be run after, and seized, and forced into the service. For this purpose, different parties were on the look-out for them on their return from the landing-place; and the porters were so well aware of this fact, that the instant they had rid themselves of a load, they took to their heels, and ran a race through the town in the hope of reaching some friend's house. A legion, however, was lying in wait, and hotly pursued them, and the first man that overtook a porter buffeted and scuffled with him, till he gained possession of the cords with which the sacks are carried down. This object once achieved, the porter was at a nonplus, and had nothing for it, but to submit tamely to his fate, and follow his vanquisherw hithersoever he led him.

I have witnessed most ludicrous races of this description. Men pouncing out from corners of streets, like spiders upon incautious flies, and nearly throttling their unfortunate victims, in order to obtain possession of their insignia of office. The captain of the barque had, on the occasion I allude to, just succeeded in capturing a draft of porters—but the chase had been a stern chase, and a long one; the weather was sultry, and the skipper was

perfectly breathless with his exertions. He was in a towering passion, and did not know exactly how, or on whom to wreak his wrath, and in his excitement had nearly throttled his captive, by taking what he termed a double turn, with his bony fist inserted in the porter's shirt collar. Judge, then, of his indignation on finding that the crew of a Greek vessel had not only taken possession of the boat lawfully his own, but coolly thrown the sailor whom he had put into possession, and all his wheat, into the sea. This insult was not to be brooked. Fists were flourished on one side, and stilettos on the other; and had they come to actual blows, murder must have inevitably ensued. The timely interposition of the Greek Consul and some merchants happily prevented a collision; but such is the forgiving nature of sailors of every nation, that the last time I saw these very parties, who were ready to cut each other's throats, so long as their separate interests clashed, they were cosily seated round a ricketty table in the only casino at Caipha, drinking grog and smoking cigars, and wishing each other every happiness that the world could bestow.

The trade is annually augmenting, and as a natural result, the difficulty of loading must in proportion increase, unless stringent measures are adopted to prevent the growing evil. At a very small outlay, Caipha might be made one of the securest ports on the coast of Syria. The holding ground is excellent, and the shipping in great measure protected by nature from the prevalent storms of the Mediterranean.

The view of Caipha from the shipping is extremely picturesque. The abrupt little conical hill, which rears itself immediately behind the white buildings, thickly dotted with olive-trees, and with the remains of an old watch-tower half way up, from either side of which the walls that encompass the town are distinctly visible; the fine sandy beach that extends on the Acre side as far as the eye can discern; the bold striking outline of Carmel, dipping abruptly into the ocean; the clear blue horizon, speckled with the snowy-white sails of distant vessels; the gracefully drooping palm-trees, and the vast variety of shade and colour afforded by the bush and trees spread along the sea-side: these objects, thrown into one picture, give it the appearance of a terrestrial paradise. But once set

your foot on shore, and the bright delusion vanishes. Sight and smell are equally offended, and when you step from the boat upon the slippery landing-place, you are immediately persuaded that Caipha is, after all, nothing more than a very miserable and filthy village.

The first gate you pass through after touching *terra firma*, is distinguished by the title of Custom-house, and under its arches, seated on a well-worn carpet, is no less a personage than the collector of the customs himself. He is, or at least was, a careworn individual, with a beard and moustache turned prematurely grey, and from his appearance, you conclude that he has long since relinquished all hopes of earthly enjoyment or peace. His natural voice has departed, and in lieu thereof he possesses a husky growl, which is, however, seldom brought into play, unless to terrify small children, who assemble in this vicinity to gather up the grain which is scattered about. On your right hand, in passing the gate, are two wretched little hovels—which, nevertheless, occupy the most agreeable site in Caipha, being detached from all other buildings and open to the pure sea breeze. Before you is an open space of ground, a

kind of square, the usual resting-place of caravans when they arrive too late in the evening to reach their own village before night-fall. This spot may be considered the greatest nuisance in the place; for the miasma arising from the accumulated filth of some hundreds of camels and mules, packed in a very limited space, is frightful beyond conception. To the right is the native *Khan* or *Caffiné*, devoted to the use of indigent native travellers. Beyond, are a couple of granaries, with a broken wall intervening, over which you may scramble, if you are sure-footed, into the garden of the Greek casino; but there is a deep well on one side, and an empty pit on the other, into one or the other of which you are sure to pitch, if you lose your balance. To the left there is another granary, and beyond, the walls of the town, and the Acre gate. This gate is shut at night and opened at sunrise, ostensibly for the security of Caipha, and is guarded by a sleepy soldier, in very rusty accoutrements, who labours under the delusion that he is rendering great service to the State and to the Sultan, by never letting any one in or out of the gate after or before the proper hour, the fact having never entered his

brains, that scores of denizens, who happen to find themselves shut out, enter nightly by divers apertures, not fifty yards from where he is stationed.

The distance from the Customs' gate to the main street is not many yards; but it is muddy and dangerous withal; for if the traveller, unconscious of peril, does not slip and sprain his ankles, he runs the risk of being maimed for life by a kick from some vicious mule or donkey, or a camel puts his great hoof on the tenderest part of his foot. By dint of careful navigation, he may, however, succeed in piloting his way forward, and reaching the main street, the only street in Caipha. Here he finds wretched fragments of pavement on either side and a deep dyke in the centre, while the street is flanked to the left and right by the magazines of venders of articles of daily consumption; such squalid little hovels, so meagrely furnished, and so utterly filthy, that one turns from them loathingly. Their dimensions, on an average, are about five feet square; yet the imperturbable complacency and self-conceit of the Arab tradesman is such, that the proprietor of one of these little styes, looks down

upon the passers-by as a class of beings infinitely inferior to himself; and it is with reluctance he relinquishes his pipe even for the purpose of serving a customer. One shop contains a dozen pair of Turkish shoes and a pipe-stick or two; another has a basketful of very questionable fish; a third restricts himself to oranges and grapes; a fourth is more aspiring, and deals in tobacco and walnuts; while a fifth surpasses all his neighbours by a gaudy display of French pictures, saints and martyrs in gilded frames, tin snuff-boxes with looking-glasses in the lid, cotton pocket-handkerchiefs, and a basket of eggs. They strew no flowers to welcome your arrival in their native town, but in lieu thereof the ground is thickly besprinkled with date and olive stones, the rind of water-melons, orange and lemon pips, cabbage and lettuce leaves, and, by way of variety, an occasional dead cat's head, and tails of fish and feathers of fowls. You hasten through this place as fast as your legs will carry you, and after being jostled by foot passengers, bruised by donkey-panniers, nearly crushed by camels and stunned by sudden encounters with the sharp angles of the wooden shutters of various shops, you suddenly

emerge into that part of the town inhabited by the European consular agents, and still following your faithful guide are conducted into the casino, where, in the comparative tranquillity that reigns around, you at last have time and inclination to take breath.

The private or family residences of the shop-keepers in Caipha are situated immediately behind the main street, itself in an unexplored region. How they ever reach home of a rainy day, is to me an inexplicable mystery, for nothing I know of except a duck would ever venture up the muddy dykes and sluices that lead to their several domiciles. What there is within, I had no wish to investigate; but the frequent demands made on me for quinine and Epsom salts, were ample proof that fever was a constant inmate.

The baker and the butcher at Caipha were natives of Cyprus, Greeks to the backbone, and so was the proprietor of the casino: they ate, drank and slept, danced, smoked and laughed together, and three jollier-looking Bacchanalians I have seldom stumbled across. The casino itself consisted of one moderately sized room, in the centre of which was a billiard-table, which caused

it to be the evening resort of the *élite* of Caipha. Chairs and benches and little tables were placed round the room, and some of the guests played cards and some billiards, while others chatted and smoked in friendly groups over the billiard-table. Three leafless boughs of laurel were hung above, and at dusk millions of flies, that had infested the bazaars during the day, flew into the casino, and as many as could manage it, made these laurel boughs their roosting place for the night. There they were suffered to remain, until the hour approached when every one bethought himself of home, and bed-time was the signal for the proprietor to seize upon a huge ship's bucket, which had been a kind of receiver for the slops and ends of numerous glasses of spirit, and having set fire to its inflammable contents, he thrust it adroitly up each successive bough till the whole of the flies were submerged in the flaming liquid. I was informed that this was repeated every night with like success, so that it would be a difficult undertaking to form anything like a correct computation of the numbers that are thus destroyed annually. I was once asked how it was that flies infested houses only to a certain

extent—why half the number, or twice as many, were not to be found in any given room, as if every fly in the room were killed, there would be the same number, or nearly so, in it again after the lapse of a few minutes. My querist was of opinion that this arose from a kind of intuitive perception in the flies as to the exact amount of sustenance likely to be obtained in different apartments. I confess I am unable to solve the problem myself.

Donkeys offer the safest means of transit to those who wish to visit the celebrated convent on Mount Carmel. The fare is three piastres (about sixpence), and the road is almost impracticable to horses. I was so sick of Caipha, and so ill from the atmosphere I breathed there, that I cheerfully availed myself of the invitation of an hospitable monk, to pass three days on the top of Elijah's Mountain. Half an hour's jogging brought me within the precincts of the holy convent, and right glad was I to find myself well out of the walls of that most wretched town of Caipha, and high above the reach of its baneful miasma.

CHAPTER IX.

Mount Carmel—The Convent—Its history and its founder — Story of a monk's ambition — Frère Clementi — Elijah's cave—An industrious brotherhood—Monastic albums—Descent from the mountain.

THE Convent of Mount Carmel, which is one of the most spacious and commodious buildings to be found in the Holy Land, has undergone many vicissitudes and changes since its original construction on the Mount of Elijah. The Roman soldiers, after the siege of Jerusalem by Titus, utterly destroyed it. The Saracens, after the termination of the Crusade and abandonment of the Holy Land, massacred its monks, and once more razed it to its foundations. And at a later date, after it had been rebuilt at great expense, and had served as an hospital to the dying and

wounded during the siege of Acre by Bonaparte, it was attacked by the infuriated Turks, and the sick and the wounded were massacred in cold blood, while the monks were driven forth and dispersed, leaving nothing behind but ruined and smoky walls to indicate the spot where these horrors had transpired.

In 1819, the Frère Jean Baptiste was deputed by the Pope to visit the site of the ruined convent, in order that an estimate might be obtained of the outlay requisite for its reconstruction, on a scale more magnificent than had heretofore been adopted. But the time chosen proved most unpropitious; for Abdalla Pasha, then Governor-General of the Sultan's dominions in Syria, a fanatical Turk, and inveterate Frank-hater, was no sooner apprized of the arrival of this missionary, and of his design regarding the ruined convent, than he despatched a fulminating letter to the Grand Vizier at the Sublime Porte, depicting in vivid colours the evils that must result from the re-establishment of the convent, which, being in the hands of Christians and Gours, who could at any moment take advantage of the power invested in their hands, and convert it into

a fortress, would prove a most formidable check to the advancement of the Sultan's authority. He asked permission to blow up the walls and foundations of the place; and his request being granted, mines were laid at proper distances, and the poor priest, who came out with lively hopes of restoring the convent to more than pristine splendour, had the unspeakable mortification of beholding its very foundation-stones blown into the air, and scattered in dusty fragments over the bald face of the barren and desolate Carmel.

"Dès lors," says the French tract descriptive of this event, "toute terre cultivée redevint sauvage aux environs du Carmel: les tigres et les panthères, chassés par le voisinage de l'homme, reparurent quand l'homme se fût éloigné; et les Arabes et les chakals, ces enfants du désert, vinrent dresser leur tente et creuser leur tanière au milieu des ruines qu'avaient été la maison de Dieu. Et là, où l'hospitalité était exercée autrefois, comme on Saint Bernard et à la Chartreuse, les voyageurs périrent assassinées par les Bédouins ou dévorés par les bêtes féroces."

In 1821, the disappointed priest returned to

Rome; but in 1826, through the influence of the French Government, and the representations made to the Porte by the French Ambassador at Constantinople, a firman was obtained from the Sultan Mahmoud, authorizing the restoration of the convent, and Frère Jean Baptiste landed again at Caipha. Alone, in the solitary silence that reigned around on the desolate mountain-top, he planned the structure which now exists; and having reduced his ideas to a paper-model, he bethought him of that most necessary auxiliary for the realization of his scheme — the funds. His very lowest estimate amounted to a very considerable sum—a sum, large even for a banker in those parts to command, and a fabulous one for any man in his position to realize or obtain, considering that he had not ten sous placed at his disposal, and was actually dependent on the hospitality of the Arabs for his scanty supply of daily food.

Such difficulties and obstacles would have been sufficient, one would imagine, to deter the most determined and sanguine character from the further pursuit of the most cherished hopes and plans; but they seemed only to act as an

incentive to the ingenuity and tact of this meritorious old monk. He remembered, in his dilemma, that at a distance of about five hours ride from Carmel, and three hours from Nazareth, there were two water-mills, which, from the presence of war or other mishaps, had been for many years totally abandoned; and the idea of bringing these into operation, and making them the means of procuring the necessary funds, struck so forcibly upon his mind, that he determined to set about the good work without loss of time. His efforts were rewarded by the happy discovery of a fine spring of water not far from the mills, which, by aid of a very simple aqueduct, might be brought up to them, and here one great difficulty was overcome. It now remained to induce the proprietors to dispose of this, to them, useless property, and procure the money for the purchase.

The mills were the property of a Druse family, and had descended from father to son through many generations. They thought the disposal of such an inheritance would be an act impious in the extreme, and would on no conditions consent to the sale. The Frère Jean Baptiste then pro-

posed that they should be worked on joint account, and that the profits should be divided into three equal portions—one third to the owners, one third to the mechanic (the monk himself) who should put them into working condition, and the remaining third to the person who would furnish the funds requisite for the building of the aqueduct and for repairing the mills. This proposition was readily accepted, and the old monk went to a Turk of his acquaintance, and requested the loan of nine thousand francs for the execution of his plans, which was readily advanced, and in twelve years time, besides the annual third portion allotted to him, the Turk had the gratification of replacing in his strong-box the nine thousand francs he had so munificently lent to a stranger, and that stranger a Catholic Priest. Thus, in point of fact, a rigid believer in Mahomet may be considered as the founder, in a pecuniary point of view, of the stupendous convent that now rears itself proudly on the highest summit of Mount Carmel.

Many and distant, however, were the lands visited by the zealous and indefatigable missionary for the purpose of procuring funds sufficient for

the realization of his day-dream upon earth. Kings and potentates were amongst the list of his friends and supporters, and the poor of every nation, our own country excepted, added their mite for the support of this truly hospitable and Christian edifice. The Frère Jean Baptiste has finished his labours upon earth: he has made his last pilgrimage—performed his last vow; and his gentle spirit, so often harassed and troubled in this world, has now sought repose "where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest."

I am indebted to good Frère Clementi, a monk designed to follow in the footsteps of Frère Jean Baptiste, for the foregoing sketch of the convent's history. The rooms allotted to me during my sojourn in the vast building, would do credit to many an hotel in Europe; and as for the fare, it was sumptuous and almost princely. Frère Clementi, in whose friendship I shall ever feel proud, showed me everything that was to be seen within and without the the convent. The rooms of the different friars—the apartments allotted to strangers—the church underground—the Cave of Elijah—the crosses and the rosaries

placed on the altar there erected: in short, everything that a traveller would wish to see. Nor must I omit to mention a visit to the fine kitchen-garden, and to a well stocked poultry-yard.

There was one room Frère Clementi (who was a doctor and apothecary as well as priest) particularly prided himself upon, and this was the *pharmacy* attached to the convent. This department came under his special jurisdiction, and to give him only his due, it was as well kept and as neatly arranged, and contained as many valuable drugs and medicines, as any doctor's shop of similar dimensions in any part of the world. Many a poor sufferer from fever and other maladies, has had recourse to the good monk's skill, and many a heart, unless callous to all better feelings, must gratefully remember the mild physician, whose healing art brought ease and health to their suffering frames.

There is a fine old book in the convent, a monastic album, in which, as an act of courtesy, travellers are expected to inscribe their names and the date of their arrival and departure; and manifold indeed are the autographs it contains. Of course, few have confined themselves to the

mere matter-of-fact form prescribed. With hardly a single exception, all have launched forth into well-merited eulogiums of the place and the worthy friars; but the variety of style and composition is vast indeed. Some confine themselves to prose, others indulge in poetical effusions; and English and French, Germans, Italians, Spaniards, Portuguese, even Arabs and Turks have lent their pens and brains to trumpet forth the praises of the convent. There is only one discontented individual, who, at the same time that he acknowledges the abundant and hospitable supply of comforts requisite for the body, deplores deeply the absence of all food for the soul. The monks were very naturally much incensed at this inscription, and would have cut the leaf out, had it not been for the writings connected with it. Amongst other names, I observed those of Lamartine and a celebrated Italian poet; and the number of English travellers that have partaken of the hospitality of Carmel far exceeds that of any other nation, though I fear we are the only people who have never subscribed to its maintenance and support.

Daily improvements to secure the comfort of

the monks and of the traveller are being made. A fine windmill was in the course of erection last year (1850), under the supervision of a clever Hungarian or Polish refugee. This will enable the charitable fraternity to place finer bread before their many guests, and in a very short time the convent will be entirely independent of Caipha, for the market supplies are now procured from that town. As it is, they sow their own corn, bake their own bread, rear their own cattle and poultry, grow their own vegetables, make their own wine, and are their own cooks, bakers and gardeners.

On leaving the convent, I had to walk down Mount Carmel, and proceed on foot as far as Caipha, as no donkeys were procurable in those lofty regions; and the distance was so short, and going down hill so easy, that they were not worth the trouble and delay of being sent for. Besides, I trusted my own two legs more than I would their four in this slippery and steep descent. Having arrived at Caipha, I delayed only long enough to get my baggage from the Custom-house, where, with a trifling exception, it had all remained in statu quo since the date of my arrival from

Gaza; and then, setting spurs to my steed, galloped rapidly along the pleasant sea-beach, making all speed to get into Acre before the gates of the looming fortress should be closed for the night.

CHAPTER X.

ACRE OR ST. JEAN D'ARCA.

St. Jean d'Acre—Description of the fortress—A renegade Pole—The Pasha—His reception of an English lady—The trade of Acre—Strange operation on a horse—Arabs and their steeds—A Turkish traveller—The Reis.

ACRE is a fine town, situated on the extreme point of a headland that protrudes itself far into the sea, by which the town is bounded on three sides. The fourth and rearward aspect of the fortress looks upon the distant range of Lebanon, and the intervening space between the high land and the beach, is interspersed with pretty summer houses and gardens, vineyards and corn-fields, and rich pasturage for cattle. The streets are wide,

and kept in good order; the houses built well, and, in some instances, handsomely; and yet, notwithstanding its position and apparent cleanliness, Acre, during the summer months, is considered the most fatal residence for Europeans on the western coast of the Mediterranean. Its fevers are so pernicious, that few survive an attack for a longer space than forty-eight hours. So trivial are the causes that give rise to this malignant disease, that the smallest deviation from a temperate *regimen*, or the slightest exposure to heat or cold, renders one liable to an immediate attack, and as the doctor coolly told me, *ensuite vous succombez*. The doctor was a very clever man, and withal well informed and gentlemanly. He was a Pole by birth, but, by education and inclination a cosmopolite; and when everything was going wrong in his native country, he had migrated eastward. The Turkish authorities, from whom he met a cordial reception at Constantinople, admired and appreciated his talents, and a lucrative appointment was offered on condition of his embracing the Mahometan faith, which, after a week's reflection, he consented to do, abjuring his Redeemer for the sake of worldly advancement. Now he is

the chief medical officer at Acre, with a salary of somewhere about thirty thousand piastres per annum, and with double that revenue gained by private practice, his services as a physician being in continual requisition from Caipha to Tyre and Sidon.

It was a difficult matter to know where to lodge during my brief sojourn at Acre. Hotel there was none, except a miserable tavern, that aspired to that honour, and where I had, on a former visit, remained three days ill in bed, on which occasion, indeed, the poor people who kept the place were very civil and attentive; but, though the rooms allotted to travellers were quite aloof from that portion of the house allotted to the habitual guests, nothing but dire necessity could ever have induced me to put up with its wretched accommodations. Mr. Fingey was a kind, hospitable old man, but then he was a Jew, and his dishes and method of living would ill suit my palate. I decided, therefore, on accepting the polite invitation of Mr. Mayinhi, a highly respectable merchant, residing at Acre.

This gentleman was kind enough to show me all over the town. The site of the dreadful gunpowder explosion, and the monument raised

to commemorate the gallant deeds and death of a British officer, are what chiefly attract attention. The fortifications are being rapidly repaired, and in a few years not a vestige will remain of the ruin, which now mark the prowess of the British arms, unless it be the disfigured tops of the many minarets, all of which have been reduced to a most deplorably tottering condition since the great bombardment. During my walk, and in fact throughout my stay, I was struck with the great civility and attention paid to Englishmen in Acre by the Turks and other native inhabitants; and this, I was informed, extends itself to every one who can lay claim to British protection, so effectual has been the lesson taught them by our frigates and steamers.

Acre, like most Turkish towns, is infested with hungry and quarrelsome dogs, which are an intolerable nuisance. Its population may be estimated at about six thousand souls. It is governed by a Pasha of three tails, in whose gift are the appointments of the Mutzellimsies of Caipha, Nazareth, and I believe even Tyre.

The Pasha, when I visited Acre in 1850, was quite a young man, of not more than

twenty-three or twenty-four years of age. He had been born and educated at Constantinople, and was therefore far more advanced in civilization than the courtiers who surrounded him, and formed his suite; and greatly were these latter scandalized one day by the appearance of an unveiled young Englishwoman in the hall of audience at the Pasha's seraglio. A party of English captains, whose vessels were loading at Caipha, took it into their heads one fine Sunday morning to sail over to Acre in their boats; and one of the party who had his wife (the young woman alluded to) with him that voyage, brought her over also to see the lions. They all took up their abode at the Vice-Consul's, and after trotting him nearly off his legs, nothing would content them but a visit to the Bawshaw, as they called him, and who was a species of animal that none of the party had ever yet set eyes upon. The horror-stricken Jew endeavoured to persuade them of the indecorous interpretation that might be given to the fact of an unveiled English lady visiting a Turkish Pasha at his own seraglio; and failing on this tack, he endeavoured to intimidate the captain's wife by telling her that the spot she was so anxious to

visit was no other than the site of the cruel murders, and other atrocities, practised upon some forty unoffending and virtuous young females by the notorious and blood-thirsty "Seid Pasha." If they had had no predetermination or intention on the subject, the very mention of this circumstance, which the Hebrew had wholly fabricated, was sufficient to induce them to persist in their object; and they all went, and were very courteously received, being treated with pipes and sherbets. The Pasha, in the presence of an innocent young Englishwoman, forgot all his Turkish pomp and dignity, in his efforts to be courteous and entertaining. The compliments he paid the party were wretchedly interpreted to them, but there was one for the especial behoof of the lady, which, for its originality, is well worthy of record. "How much I regret," said the Pasha through the medium of his interpreter, "that I have not here, as I had at Stamboul, a garden in which grow the most beauteous roses and lilies, for I would then beg Madame to saunter for a few minutes amongst them, in order that they might, drooping, hide their heads in envy of the blush that dwells on her cheek, and the pure, snowy

whiteness of that beautiful brow." I am not aware of any of Moore's songs having been translated into Turkish, or I should have thought the Pasha had been quoting him, as his compliment strangely resembles the following stanza :

"And by that brow where innocence reposes,
Sleeping just like moonlight upon snow ;
And by that cheek whose slightest blush discloses
A hue more bright than dwelt on Eden's roses.
I love but thee, I love but thee.

The import trade of Acre is limited both as to quantity and quality, as also to the number of the importers. Beyrout, the emporium of Syrian commerce, supplies the whole of the coast. Cotton twist, chintzes of bright and catching colours, and a few bales of strong coarse cloths, are supplied by Liverpool through Beyrout ; and London, *viâ* the same route, sends coffee, sugar, cochineal, indigo, tin, and other articles, which come under the head of colonials. The exports are similar to those of the other ports of Palestine ; but the harbour being very insecure to vessels of any considerable tonnage, as the place becomes known, so, in proportion, difficulties are raised by the

masters of English vessels at Beyrout in chartering their vessels for Acre, and a higher rate of freight demanded accordingly.

Here the natives begin to assume some kind of costume, and both men and women endeavour to outvie each other in the cost and cut of their garments. Until reaching Caipha, coming from Gaza, one seldom meets much variety in the fashions. These simple people, men and women, strictly confine themselves to a blue shirt, of wide dimensions, which reaches down as low as the feet, and, with the exception of a bright-coloured handkerchief tied round the waist, and a similar one knotted round the fez or tarboushe, they make no attempt at ornament. I have, however, seen some girls of Egyptian origin, whose symmetry in figure, feet, hands, and feature, was so perfect, that few amongst the tight-laced frequenters of a ball-room could hope to vie with them in nature's gifts. But Acre is becoming a fashionable town; and the natives and many of the Europeans try to ape the manners and airs of their more polished neighbours at Beyrout, though, being as clumsy as they are ignorant, they fail signally in the attempt.

In Acre there is a plentiful supply of Turkish

veterinary surgeons, and about the most curious sight I ever witnessed was a horse under treatment by these practitioners. First they threw it on the ground by tying its four feet or hoofs so closely together, that it became as helpless as an infant; then a tight bandage was placed over the nose and mouth, only leaving sufficient space for the animal to breathe. A Turkish pipe, containing tobacco, bang, hashish, cuscus, and other narcotics, was inserted in one of the nostrils, and a spark being placed upon the bowl, the horse involuntarily inhaled the stupifying smoke, which had the effect, after a very short period, of rendering it unconscious of what was going on. Then the skill of surgery was brought into play, and the fetlock of the poor brute being laid open, a perfect hive of worms, deposited by a fly, common in some parts of the desert between Damascus and Bagdad, was duly extracted. The wound was closed up with pitch sticking-plaister, and the bands being unloosed, buckets of cold water were thrown over the horse, who quickly revived. The foot was now placed in a sling, and a few days afterwards, so effective had been the operation, the horse was fit to pursue its daily avocations.

None in Europe can rival the Arab in these climates in treating a sick horse. The Bedouin and his mare might replace the dove as an emblem of love; for his mare is to the Arab his home in the desert, and the only permanent home he knows. He is borne everywhere on her back; he lives upon her milk for days together; rests under her shade on a sultry afternoon; makes her sleek sides his cushion when reposing at night, and his greatest pride in life—a pride compared with which wife and children are a very small consideration—is to talk of the swiftness and the gentleness of his mare. A secret language exists between the animal and its master—a language of tone and gesticulation; and the Arab praises or censures his mare, and remonstrates and sympathises with her, as a father would with an intelligent son. Their communications, however, are made in a language of their own; and none but themselves possess the secret.

An anecdote, illustrative of this fact, was related to me by the late and deeply-lamented John Barker, Esq., for many years British Consul-General in Egypt, a gentleman whose hospitality and philanthropy will form the subject of

another chapter in my wanderings over the East.

A Bedouin whose only treasure on earth consisted of a magnificent mare on which his affections were wholly concentred, being overpowered by excessive heat and fatigue in the desert, dismounted and sought a temporary refuge in the arms of Somnus. Scarcely had he fallen into a deep sleep, sheltered by the shade cast over him by his much-loved mare, when another wanderer of the desert, belonging to a different and inimical tribe, approached the spot. It so happened that the stranger possessed an animal, which, though beautiful to look upon, was old and slow in her movements, and it instantly occurred to him to exchange steeds. No sooner was the thought conceived than it was executed, and the exchange being made, the robber crept stealthily away. So soon as he had gained what he considered a safe distance he set spurs to his captive, and was making off, when the slumbering Bedouin awoke, and great was his grief and regret to discover the trick practised upon him. Nothing, however, remained but to pursue the delinquent, and either recover his lost mare, or perish in the attempt.

He vaulted into the saddle, but, though so anxious to recover his lost steed, such was his pride in her good qualities, that on observing the wretched animal he bestrode gain fast upon her, he shouted to the thief: "You blockhead, why don't you touch the tip of the left ear!" The hint was taken, and the poor Bedouin had the satisfaction and regret of seeing his fleet courser disappear far beyond all hopes of recovery, in the vast wilderness that then lay before him.

I consider it to be an utter impossibility for any stranger to obtain a moment's rest at night, in the town of Acre. The numberless sentries, stationed at every fifty yards on the ramparts, startle you out of your first delightful sleep by the unearthly cry they raise to assure each other, and be assured themselves, that every one is wide awake. Then the street-keepers, a species of private police, who are all grown old and toothless in the service, indulge you at half-hourly intervals, with staves from songs, which were quite the rage in their younger days; and in addition to this infliction, dogs howl and owls hoot the whole night through. Then the patrol pass close under the window, and the noises of many voices and

clanking of arms, and echo of iron-shod, boots and smell of chibouks, all "murder sleep." Besides these annoyances, fever is always raging in the town, and the doctor or the apothecary (and there is small distinction between them in the East) lives somewhere close by, and the earnest knocking and shouting of some unhappy father who has come to seek aid in the eleventh hour, adds to the general din. "Signor Medico! Signor Medico!" is the cry, "benite presto per l'amor de Dio, elle mia figlia a moribunda." And though in some cases anxiety has exaggerated the danger, it is often but too true; and next morning a flag half-mast high, and a funeral procession, proclaim the calamity that has fallen like a thunderbolt on some disconsolate family.

With the exception of the home of Mayingy, my most hospitable friend, I have few pleasant recollections of Acre, as it stands now. Being heartily weary of the old place, I took leave of it, and of all its abominations, and sailed for Sidon in a small Arab felucca (the identical one that had brought me from Gaza), this time more fearfully incommoded by the want of probity on the part of the Reis.

An old Turkish woman, with her children to the third generation, were my fellow-passengers on this occasion. They were in the forepart of the felucca. I had made my servant spread my mattress aft, and I had this part barricaded with boxes and bags and trunks, to prevent intrusion. As for remonstrating with the Arab captain on this second breach of compact, with a view of gaining entire possession of the boat, I knew this was useless; for his inventive genius would have been very sure to discover some plausible excuse. I made up my mind, therefore, to be a pattern of patience and good temper, and bear all my troubles with stoical indifference. The beauty of the scenery, as we glided rapidly down within a stone's throw of the coast, lighted up as it was by a glorious moon, the peaceful serenity of the night, and the delightful balmy land breeze that came off shore, laden with the odours of the wild flowers of the mountains, all combined to cheer and soothe the heart, and pour into imagination's many channels a flood of associations connected with this renowned land. I thought and dozed, and woke up and thought again, till at last I fell fast asleep. But, alas! my rest was not suffered

to be of long duration; for, as I grew drowsy, the old Turkish woman, who had been nodding and groaning the whole way, grew better and more wakeful, and began to question the Reis about friends she had known some half century before in Sidon, arousing images that had long lain dormant in her breast. Day broke in the east ere she had concluded her string of inquiries; and, truly, she could have derived but small gratification from the replies of the Reis, for he invariably shook his head and exclaimed, "Mart! Salani Rasak;" which may be interpreted as "dead! pray Heaven protect your head."

Before sunrise we had cast anchor off Sidon, close under a reef of high rocks, which extend for about a quarter of a mile in a line with the town, and serve in some measure as a sort of natural breakwater for the smaller craft that frequent the port.

CHAPTER XI.

SIDON AND TYRE.

Sidon and Tyre — The landing-place of Sidon — Ideas respecting English travellers — The French Consul — Walk through Sidon.

WITH Sidon commences the beauty of scenery and the richness of cultivation, which goes on increasing as you approach the northernmost ports and towns of the fertile region of Syria; but in Sidon we are yet in Palestine, though the desolation and ruins of that holy land are no longer visible. We have left behind sterile and stony soil, in which vegetation seldom attains any perfection, and which, in many parts, refuses even to nurture the tender blade of grass that springs

up with every successive summer shower, and is as regularly withered by the following day's scorching heat.

Sidon is a perfect orchard. The dark foliage of orange and lemon trees is softened into livelier and lighter tinges of green, till boldly standing forward amongst the rest, are clearly discernible the gracefully bending leaves of the banana—a fruit unknown in other parts of Syria and Palestine, yet which, from some great suitableness of soil or climate, or both, arrives at its highest perfection in Sidon. Behind the town are the thickly-wooded hills; in the immediate vicinity fir trees and wild oaks and olives blend their variegated hues, and far to the rear, in crevices and clefts, towering aloft, rises the noble range of Lebanon, with snow-topped peaks, defining boldly the outline of the picture on the clear, bright azure of the sky. Then the town itself is prettily built. The fine old ruined tower, projecting far into the sea, with the bridge of many arches, that was built to reach it; the gay-looking white-washed houses, peeping over the tops of fine fruit gardens, and rising gradually till they reach the castle-topped summit of the hill; the busy throng of pigmy-

looking people, in bright coloured dresses, running about the beach, all combine to make the landscape inviting and strange to the eye of the wayfarer, rocked about in a wretched boat full a mile from the shore. Yet there is no remedy but patience. Wait you must till the Reis, who has gone on shore in a kind of sieve that no humane person would trust a cat's life in, returns, and then the boat obtains pratique, and you may land as you best can.

There is a great rise and fall of tide at Sidon, owing, I imagine, to the many under-currents and different inlets that exist amongst the sunken rocks, and those that are above the level of the sea, two miles away from land, where the current sets in a southern direction with immense rapidity. A mile further off, it sets equally strong to the northward. Vessels bound to Beyrout, coming from Malta, and steering direct for the latter port by observation and compass, are surprised to find that they invariably make the high land of Sidon, because this is in direct contradiction to the observations contained in their sailing directions, which are compiled from the surveys of eminent nautical men. This error, I think, may be traced

to the possibility of the surveys having been made from the anchorage-ground, in which case the computations regarding currents would be strictly correct, otherwise an extraordinary change must have taken place since the date of these surveys, for it is a notorious fact that the current sweeps rapidly round Sidon, and even Ras Beriout in a northern direction, and continues this course within a mile and a half or so of the land, till it reaches the extreme northern bay in the Gulf of Ickanderoon, whereas vessels further out at sea (but always in sight of land) are experiencing a southerly set.

Owing to this rise and fall, landing at Sidon is sometimes no easy matter, and so it chanced unluckily at the hour that we got pratique. I had, therefore, no alternative, but to be broiled in the sun till nigh upon mid-day, when there would be a sufficiency of water to permit of our passing the bar, and getting into the Fisherman's Harbour, or to risk my life in the afore-mentioned sieve, in which the Captain had successfully brought off permission to land. I preferred the latter evil, being pretty confident in my skill as a swimmer; and paddled by a little boy, and care-

fully balancing myself, I at length had the extreme gratification of finding myself safe, and even dry, on shore, though without my servant, whom I left to follow with my boxes at noon tide.

There is a good deal of scrambling and hopping, and rather break-neck work, to get through, even after one is once landed; and this is occasioned by slippery sea-weed, and smooth rocks, which show themselves when the tide is low. But having once got safe to the Turkish coffee-house on the other side, all trouble is over. This is approached through crowds of indigent watermen and ragged boys, assembled to criticise your appearance, and conjecture what on earth can have made a man, who must be worth boxes of money, leave his harem, to risk life and health, and suffer every discomfort, in a miserable Arab felucca. Their general opinion of an English traveller is, that he is either a lunatic or a magician: a lunatic, if on closely watching his movements, they discover that he pays little attention to anything around him; a confirmed lunatic, if he goes out sketching, and spends his time in spoiling good paper with scratches and hieroglyphics; and a magician when inquisitive about ruins, and

given to picking up stones and shells, gathering sticks and leaves of bushes, or buying up old bits of copper, iron, and silver. In these cases, he is supposed, by aid of his magical powers, to convert stones and shells into diamonds of immense price; and the leaves and sticks are charms, by looking at which he can bestow comforts upon his friends, and snakes and pestilence upon his luckless enemies. If a traveller pick up a stone, and examine it carefully, he will be sure to have at his tail a host of malapert little boys deriding him, though keeping at a very respectful distance, in deference to his magical powers. Should he indeed turn round suddenly, and pursue them a few steps, they fly in an agony of fear, the very veins in their naked little legs almost bursting; and they never stop to look back till they have got well amongst the crowd again, where, panting for breath, they recount to their auditors the dreadful look that devil of a Frank gave them, making fire come out of his eyes, and adders out of his mouth.

Monsieur Aunman, Consul pour La République Française, was the only European residing at Sidon. *Soi-disant* Europeans were plentiful, but

M. Aunman was the only rightful claimant, and a worthy one he was. Possessing all the vivacity of a Frenchman, he was as discreet as an English chancellor; and as fond of beef-steaks and plum-pudding, and even of good beer, as any scion of John Bull.

In Sidon there is a fine large building belonging to the French Government,. and called the French khan, or caravansary, in which the French Consul always resides. My previous acquaintance with M. Aunman had been limited. We were fellow-passengers on board the 'Grand Turk' steamer in a voyage performed from Beyrout to Jaffa, and there, at the hospitable table of the steamer's worthy commander, Henry Newbolt Esq., our acquaintance had commenced. Yet nothing could exceed the kindness of M. Aunman, who insisted on my becoming his guest during my sojourn at Sidon, an invitation I accepted the more cheerfully from the frank and cordial manner in which it was given. The part of the khan inhabited by the Consul consisted of a handsome suite of apartments very tastefully fitted up, and commanding an extensive view of the most picturesque portion of the country, of the sea, and the shipping

in the harbour. Another part of the extensive building was allotted to the use of Catholic priests, a schoolmaster, and such of the French subjects residing at Sidon as chose, for the better security of their merchandize, to live within its walls, paying a moderate rent for the apartments they made use of; while the remainder were hired by travellers, or occasional sojourners, whose presence in Sidon was requisite for the issue of pending lawsuits, or who had come on some commercial speculation entered into on their own account, or on account of merchants residing at Beyrout or in Cyprus.

The town itself is a strange mass of dark houses and streets and gloomy-looking passages of vast extent, which are roofed in to keep out the sun and wet. It can in no respect be considered a commercial town, its import trade being barely sufficient to meet the wants of the inhabitants, and its exports wholly insignificant. Here great numbers of Arab feluccas, and other native vessels of small tonnage, are laid up during the winter months, when the native seamen employ themselves in fishing. Quantities of fish are salted to supply the Beyrout and Cyprus markets during

the season of Lent. The families of these Arab sailors are permanently resident at Sidon, so that in winter its population may be computed to amount to about seven thousand souls. The climate is healthy, and living cheap, fruits and vegetables of a very good quality being abundant throughout the year.

Before leaving Sidon, I made an excursion on horseback to Tyre, and found it a wretched and deserted village, though still affording a fine little harbour for boats. On my return, I took leave of my hospitable and excellent host, and at the same time bade farewell to the shores of Palestine; for with Sidon, according to geographical limits, ended the Holy Land.

I may remark that the towns and seaports of the Holy Land, with hardly a single exception, are at certain seasons of the year very insalubrious. The natives are poverty-stricken, bigoted, and insolent; the country wild, arid, and desolate, and labouring under the burthen of a heavy curse. The sea-shore affords no secure shelter for shipping, and with the exception of Caipha, no good holding-ground for anchors. On the other hand, the accommodation afforded to travellers is good and

cheap; horses, mules, and donkeys are strong and swift of foot, and their hire very moderate; and convents to rest at are plentiful, and abounding with good cheer. It only remains to be careful in guarding against unnecessary exposure or fatigue, and, if possible, to choose a proper season of the year for a visit; and having made this choice, to traverse leisurely the allotted space of country, and not scamper over it as though racing against time, regardless of the comfort of yourself, your followers, and the heavily-laden animals that accompany you.

CHAPTER XII.

Beyrout—Its rapid rise—Refinement of the inhabitants—Grand balls—Custom-house obstructions—The promenade—Battista's Hotel—Night prowlers.

BEYROUT may be said to be the capital of all Syria. It is already so in a commercial point of view, and, if it continue to thrive as it has done, will be so in a few years as regards population. There is no other town that can boast of containing so many veritable European inhabitants, and nowhere else are similar public edifices and steam factories to be met with. Beyrout is also the seat of diplomacy; for here the Consul-Generals of the different European nations reside, and at Beyrout are discussed and quelled those oft-arising disputes between the Druses and the Maronites inhabiting

the Lebanon. It has risen into importance within the last fifteen years, and has continued steadily and rapidly increasing in wealth, population, and dimensions. In the recollection of many still residing in Syria, Beyrout was inhabited by one solitary Frank; and the arrival of any vessel from Europe was an event hailed with surprise and delight. It now contains nearly one hundred European families, and the arrival of a steamer is an ordinary occurrence.

At every successive visit that I paid Beyrout during my long sojourn of eight years in Syria, and these visits were manifold, I found vast improvements had taken place during my absence. Stupendous new mansions, the property of opulent merchants, were daily being built; beautiful country houses, summer residences of the wealthy; hotels and billiard-rooms and *cafés*, elegantly fitted up; and last, though not least, splendid steam factories, for reeling silk on European machinery, were springing up in every direction. Everywhere utility was blended with magnificence. The new buildings added fresh beauties to the already picturesque town, and, while they afforded comfort and luxury to their owners, gave employment to

hands which would otherwise have wanted work. The owners of the silk factories reaped a rich harvest, and hundreds of boys and girls earned in them a ready livelihood by working as reelers. Meanwhile, commerce augmented; the annual returns of shipping showed a vast increase in the amount of vessels; the number of lighters, too, increased in proportion, and ship-chandlers drove a thriving trade.

As the inhabitants grew more wealthy, greater attention began to be paid to dress and fashion. The Europeans set the example, and Turks, Greeks, and Armenians followed it; not that these latter gave up their Oriental costume, but this, in lieu of being of some ordinary material, was now made of rich silks and satins. The Franks promenaded in the latest Parisian fashions, and the natives in the richest Oriental robes. Among the latter the march of improvement went still further. Their sons were placed at schools, and they themselves had private tutors, so that there are few who cannot converse freely in Italian, the *Lingua Franca* of the East. In fashionable accomplishments, as singing, dancing, music, &c., they have not as yet made much pro-

gress. . It would not suit the gravity of an old Oriental merchant to be seen polking; and as for music, the greatest infliction to which a native can be exposed, in mixing with European society, is having to sit and listen to music, whether vocal or instrumental. I believe that their musical performances are equally cruel on Europeans. It is an imposition on good nature to be forced to endure an Arab concerto, or solos performed on violins by Cypriot Greeks.

Amongst the Europeans inhabiting Beyrout there are some first-rate musicians and pianists. Evening quadrille parties, or musical *reunions*, are of frequent occurrence; and some of the grandees occasionally give a ball, with a sumptuous supper, to which all the *élite* of every religion and costume are invited. On these occasions the Pasha's band generally attends, and right well do they execute their duties. The uninitiated stranger, arriving from Aleppo, or Tripoli, or Latachia, is astounded to hear the latest polkas and waltzes admirably performed. Nor are the dancers one whit behind; the newest steps are executed, and a little foreigner, who is master of the ceremonies, is in such a state of extatic delight, that he actually

forgets to twirl his moustachios, having both hands occupied in applauding rapturously.

The ball-room contains a motley assemblage, vastly amusing to those who do not dance. At the end of the room, perched on a divan of state, is the Pasha and some of the more distinguished Turks. These smoke and talk, and applaud alternately, looking upon the whole affair as a boy would at a puppet-show, and thinking that the ladies and their partners are capering about for their especial behoof and amusement. If there is anything that annoys them, it is the character of the music, which is not half sedate enough, nor sufficiently lugubrious or out of time to suit their taste. When the waltz or the quadrille, or whatever it may be, is over, and the partners promenade in couples round the room, these grey-bearded children criticise the ladies, and are heard to exclaim *Mashalla!* if any particular belle happen to be rather stout, which is the standard of beauty in Turkey. After smoking an incredible number of pipes, and seeing a great many dances, and consuming whole gallons of very strong punch, the old fellows toddle home in very merry mood, thanking their stars that it was not in their own

harems that they had just witnessed dancing, as in their hearts they look upon the affair as very indecorous as regards the ladies.

The native merchants are seated in groups of threes and fours in different parts of the room. They are not allowed to smoke in the ball-room, that privilege being enjoyed solely by the Pasha and his friends, and they pay little attention to what is going on, conversing chiefly on mercantile affairs, and similar interesting topics. They look upon the affair rather in the light of a nuisance, and do not like being kept so late out of bed; but they come as a matter of civility, and being there, feel themselves in duty bound to remain till after supper. Then after having done ample justice to the good things set before them, they go home with much the same impression as the Pasha. The Europeans, especially the younger men, remain till daylight, and it being then too late to go to bed, repair to their offices, where a great deal of soda water is consumed, and very little business done. The next night almost every one is in bed before eight o'clock, endeavouring to make up for sleep lost the night before. This will, perhaps, give the reader some faint idea of

the great balls given at Beyrout, which, however, are of rare occurrence. The ordinary *réunions* break up before midnight; for the people are a strictly mercantile set, and late hours would interfere with their daily business. To such a pitch of refinement, however, has Beyrout arrived at the present day, that it is considered by the Levantines a perfect Syrian Paris.

On arriving at Beyrout by sea, the first trial the stranger is subjected to arises from the want of a good jetty, or landing-place. The large boats you land in, invariably stick in the mud some twenty paces from the steps; and a host of half-naked natives, who have been impatiently awaiting this crisis, rush like furies into the water, and to your utter astonishment, and no small discomfort, seize upon your arms and legs, and head and body, and buffet each other for the possession of every limb. You struggle vainly in their grasp, and are finally borne away by five victorious men, one for each leg, another for each arm, and another propping you beneath. Sometimes there is a sixth, who bears your hat, which has fallen into the water in the struggle. All are pulling in different directions, at the imminent peril of tearing

you limb from limb. At length, you are deposited on *terra firma*, with your legs in a puddle, and through the heads and hands that are surrounding you, asking for buckhish, you discover divers trunks and carpet-bags, which you know to be your own, disappearing up the street with amazing rapidity. Your alarm as to their safety, is luckily quite uncalled for, as the Custom-house officers are already in pursuit of your property; and just as you have finished with the buckhishmen, which you are only able to accomplish through the interposition of the commissaire of some hotel, you have the satisfaction not only of regaining your treasures, but of seeing the delinquents well whipped for their officiousness.

The Custom-house people are strict at Beyrout, especially if a traveller arrive with bulky cases. They turn everything inside out, whilst the owner of the boxes has the satisfaction of sitting on a hard stone in a broiling sun. This ordeal generally occupies half an hour, during which the functionaries look very grave and important, and seem to take particular pleasure in rumpling everything as much as possible. But the cream of the jest is, that, after causing the utmost annoyance, they

coolly come up as though they had been rendering an important service, and ask for a buckshish. It is as well to promise them a trifle beforehand, on condition of their not rummaging your things. In my own case, I found this always had the effect of making them extremely careful in unpacking and packing my effects, and they got through them in a quarter of the usual space of time. As soon as the keys are returned, the best plan is to consign the effects immediately to the care of the commissaire of an hotel, who will battle with the porters, and if he pass rather more to one's account than he actually gives them, it is still a cheap way of avoiding their extortion.

Having escaped from these tormentors, I made my way into the town with great difficulty, taking care not to slip or fall as I passed along the waterside for a hundred yards or so, especially when just opposite the gates of the barracks, where the road is not very wide, and there is always something marvellously attractive going on, such as a soldier being bastinadoed, or an old horse shot, which attracts a constant crowd to the spot. At last I emerged in the very heart of the European bazaars. On either side are shops

kept by Greeks, Ionians, Maltese and some few Italians. Skylarks and linnets and canary-birds are suspended in gaily-painted wire cages over the doors of these magazines, and their shrill little songs enlivened the scene amazingly. On the shops themselves are painted the names of their proprietors, and very difficult names they are for any Englishman to pronounce: "Giaccometza Gionovizzia" is the easiest one I remember; and there is one Greek from Cyprus, who finds it difficult to decipher what he has written up himself, so wholly devoid of vowels is his patronymic. These shops sell crockery and glass and hardware, and a little of every-thing that comes from the West, mushroom ketchup and cod's liver oil not being forgotten in the assortment.

From this street we sauntered into a little open space with a mosaic-work fountain on one side. This is the corn-market, where not only do merchants meet and seal compacts and bargains, but they actually have their wheat thrown down and sifted on this spot, to the great discomfort

not only of passers-by, but of every house in the neighbourhood, which has windows overlooking the place, and the fine particles of dust blind and choke one, in going by. But this is the least of the evils connected with the place. It is the thoroughfare from the sea-side to the warehouses; and there are no less than five different streets that lead out of it; so that whilst a stranger is fully occupied in rubbing his eyes, and in danger of bursting a blood-vessel from a violent fit of coughing, hidden dangers come unawares upon him in the shape of a couple of strong men bearing long bars of iron, the weight of which has given them such an impetus, that they can no more step out of their onward course (without flinging the iron fairly off their shoulders) than they can help knocking over every one in their way, who does not heed in time their oft-repeated cry of *Daherak* (your back).

The first object I saw on opening my eyes, now very red from continual friction, was the friendly Commissaire beckoning kindly to me

from a door-way not many yards off; and then, for the first time, I discovered that I was destined to lodge at an hotel that comes in for a very plentiful share of the dust of the abominable corn-market. Such was my destiny, however, and I was obliged to submit to it; so climbing a dark flight of stone steps, I reached a small landing-place. To the left, was a billiard-room, and beyond a kitchen. The first room on the right, was a *salle à manger;* and further on, and above it, were bed-rooms. The proprietor of this caravansary is a good-natured Greek, who would have been better to do in the world, had he been a little more selfish than Nature has made him. He rejoices in the name of Kara Lambi, which might be interpreted as the black lamb, kara in Turkish being black.

When I arrived, the diners were beginning to muster in the *salle à manger*, and they were evidently in good appetite, from the noise they were making. There was one lunatic, with a closely-shaved pate, and one arm in a sling, who

behaved in a very obstreperous manner, and, I found afterwards, had been up since five in the morning, and being generally accustomed to breakfast at eight, and dine at two, was outrageous at having two meals squeezed into one. He was a new arrival, having only that morning come out of hospital; and the people had not yet got into his way of living. He was a sailor, and had been captain of a vessel, but a mast fell upon his head, or he fell from a mast's head, and damaged, as he himself said, his timbers considerably. In going to the hospital, the donkey on which the poor fellow was placed fell down, and broke his arm. Having an iron constitution, however, he got safely through everything, and was now only waiting for a vessel to take him home. The very sight of this poor man frightened me out of the place; and I discovered later in the day that it is the worst locanda in Beyrout, from being the resort of a mixed class of people, who frequent it, because it is cheaper than the others. Batista's

is the best hotel. There everything is clean and respectable, and as it should be, with no fear of any intruders.

The grand promenade at Beyrout in the evening, is the road that leads to the southern-most cape, called Ras Beyrout. Here the weary merchant, who has come to relax his mind from the monotonous business of the counting-house, may be met walking arm-in-arm with his managing and confidential clerk, or smoking a refreshing narghili at one of the many Turkish coffee-houses that have been erected along the cliffs. From these coffee-houses, chairs are hired by those who are weary of promenading, and many a circle is seated a few yards out of the range of the footpath or high-road, chatting away merrily, on the absorbing topics of the day. Aspiring youths here show off their horsemanship on Arabian steeds. Groups of native women are collected upon the edges of the cliff, or squatted in circles on the sandy patches of beach to be found amongst the numerous inlets. Residents in the country

are making the best of their way home after a day's work in the city; and the nearer the sun approaches to the west, before dipping in the broad expanse of waters, the more and more animating is the spectacle. But everybody in Beyrout dines at seven P.M.; and shortly after sunset, the promenade is deserted. Turks spread their carpets, and go through their evening devotions under the canopy of Heaven; the gates of the town are closed, and the busy hum of life subsides into calm and stillness, as night closes on the scene.

Most of the hotels, and certainly the best ones, are situated within the walls of the town; and here also are the dwelling-houses of the greater portion of the European and native inhabitants. When the traveller has partaken of his Oriental dinner, served in Parisian style at Batista's Hotel, he feels all the better for his repast, and may indulge in a bottle of well-iced claret. Everything is calm and still, and nothing can be more delicious than the balmy sea-breeze, which blows gently through the

wide windows. Hence he can retire to a comfortable couch, and soon falls into a refreshing sleep. But he is cruelly dragged back into a state of consciousness by a something that rings most discordantly on his ear, and which, on his rushing to the window, he discovers to proceed from the violin of a villainous Greek, who is twanging away without any particular object, but eventually strikes up some popular Cyprus air, consisting of about three bars of very wretched music, played over three hundred times with three hundred different squeaks and intonations. This Greek is a public serenader, and passes the night in wandering from street to street, occasionally accompanying the instrument with his voice, and sometimes having it accompanied also with the howl of a troop of street dogs.

Such was my experience of rest in Beyrout, and I had hardly recovered my equanimity, and was congratulating myself on having got rid of this night-owl, when my quiet was again invaded. The old man, who was employed as a

night-watcher in the street, was enjoying a comfortable nap in a dry gutter under the window, till brought to a sense of his nocturnal duties by the same cause that made me start out of bed. Conscious of his delinquency as a watchman, he now endeavoured, and succeeded beyond doubt, in making every one aware of his being wide awake, and watchful of the interests entrusted to his care, by going up one side of the street shouting at the top of his voice dives imprecations and direful threats, directed at some persons unknown. But he soon came back, singing an Oriental comic song, and stopping where he started from, laughed loud and long at his own prowess. Then he belaboured with his huge cudgel the head and shoulders of some luckless cur that was snoring contentedly on a heap of rubbish, collected in the centre of the street; and the yelping of the dog woke up a whole legion of the canine brood, who rushed round the corner, and fell upon the victim of the watchman's wrath. The yelping, and barking, and growling, and snapping was

instantly responded to in every quarter of the town, and the noise was echoed far and wide, gradually dying away in the distant dismal howling of a troop of jackals. Thus was I obliged to sit up a great part of the night in my bed, where in addition to other disagreeables, I was now assailed by mosquitoes and fleas, and became hopeless of farther sleep.

CHAPTER XIII.

The Hummum—An Oriental dressing-room—Adventure of a Turkish lady—An Eastern auctioneer—The favourite lounge—Perilous feat—The Marina—The Sisters of Charity—The American Missionaries—The Protestant burial-ground—English residents—The Barracks.

I AWOKE with the sun, more tired and care-worn and feverish, than if I had been up and dancing at a ball all night. There was a hot wind, blowing straight from the desert, a scorching wind that dried up everything. My eyes were burning, my lips parched, and my whole frame enfeebled. It was small con-

solation to hear that this dreadful wind must blow for three days. In the height of my despair I was recommended to take a Turkish bath. Loading my servant with all the necessary appendages, I staggered through one or two dark streets, and at length found myself at the hummum.

Here is to be had the greatest of all Oriental luxuries! Travellers, weary with wandering over arid and burnt-up regions, find in the hummum immediate relief for their stiff and tired limbs. The exquisite pleasure of having torrents of icy cold water rushing over your head and shoulders, in a room so heated that the vapour is rising like smoke from the floor; the preparatory luke-warm bath, the water of which grows gradually hotter and hotter, as the old man, in whose hands you are undergoing friction, gets more and more excited in the discharge of his arduous duty; the frothing up of soapsuds from the sole of the foot to the crown of the head; these are grievances for which one is amply repaid, by the final torrent

of deliciously pure and cool water, which sweeps everything before it, and leaves you a Hercules in strength and health.

After my bath, I was led (for it was an utter impossibility to walk without aid, in the *cup-cups*, or pattens, of the natives) into a room, the atmosphere of which was a few degrees less hot than the bath itself. Here I reposed a minute, and was then conducted into a second and third room, until I finally emerged into the dressing-room. This was of large dimensions, and surrounded by stone benches, on which are placed mattresses and cushions for the visitors to loll upon, whilst sipping their coffee, and partaking of sweetmeats and other refreshments. Two men, attached to every bath for this purpose, were making coffee and filling pipes for the bathers.

Even in its baths, Beyrout surpasses every other town in Syria; for, to my astonishment, I found an elegant apartment partitioned off from the building, with glass windows and doors, and drapery hanging all round,

which was used by European visitors as a dressing-room. In it were fine damask-cushioned divans, so inviting that one could not resist reclining upon them, and passing the time in eating sweetmeats, drinking sherbet, and revelling in the smoke of the perfumed narghili till the owner of the bath hinted that it would soon be twelve o'clock, after which hour, till sunset, none but females are admitted into the baths. We then set to work about our toilet; and had we not brought our own paraphernalia, brushes and combs were on the dressing-table, placed under the large pier-glass, and even pomatum and the macassar and kalydor of Rowland, with almond paste and lavender water and bouquet. By the side of these—strange conjunction!—were a clothes brush, a hat brush, three blacking brushes, and a very large bottle of undeniable Warren's blacking. Such is the pitch of perfection to which the Beyrout vapour baths have arrived!

Only Turks of very high grade are allowed to enter this dressing-room, which has been set

apart solely for the use of English and French travellers, officers of the navy, and the superior class residing in Beyrout. At other times it is kept under lock and key, and no less than six old crones are enlisted as its guard, during the time that women are in the bath.

There is an anecdote told of a Turkish girl, who, womanlike, was most inquisitive to get an insight into the mysteries concealed in this sanctum of the baths. Finding all her persuasions had no effect, she swore by the Prophet that she would enter it, despite its zealous guardians, and produce ample proof of her having done so when she visited the bath again on that day week. All her friends were to be assembled at the appointed time to witness her triumph, and one promised a bracelet, another a ring, a third some other trifling reward, in case of success. The old women, meanwhile, scouted the idea, and laughed at the presumption of the delhi or mad girl. The young lady, on her return home, communicated her intention to her brother's wife, who was as

young and as wild as herself; and two suits of the brother's clothes were instantly abstracted from his wardrobe; and, at nightfall, dressed in these, they hurried to a small magazine, kept by a Jew, which they had frequently passed in going to and fro, and there they borrowed, pawning their own gold ornaments, two complete suits of European clothes. Carefully attired, at an hour in the evening when they knew the bath would be almost entirely deserted, they sallied forth from their home, walking arm-in-arm, and entered the hummum. Taking good care to be silent, lest their voices should betray them, they made themselves understood by signs, and were ushered into the state dressing-room, and served with sherbet and sweetmeats. On the man producing the usual towels and wrappers, they beckoned him to leave them in the room, as though they were not yet ready; and no sooner were they left to themselves than they looked inquisitively about them on the table, and seeing a stone bottle of larger dimensions

than the others, supposed it to be the one from which the scents were replenished. Seizing this, the contriver of the plot concealed it in one of the large pockets of her shooting coat, and walked coolly out of the bath in company with her companion, bestowing on the hummyce the usual fee, and telling him, to his infinite astonishment, in very good Turkish, that they would come some other evening and enjoy the bath.

The clothes restored, the pledges redeemed, and the two adventurers clad in more seemly robes, their little hearts, which had been fluttering between hope and fear, were now elate with triumph. The appointed day and hour arrived, and their friends assembled to learn the result of the exploit, when to the amazement of the guardian crones, the stolen bottle was produced. There was no mistake about its identity; for there had been a hue and cry raised about it the moment it was missed. However, the old ladies were pledged beforehand, that in case of

success no tales were to be told; and to compensate them for their defeat, it was proposed that they should be all anointed forthwith with the perfume supposed to be contained in the closely-sealed bottle. One poor old woman was forced into a sitting posture, in the hottest part of the vapour-bath, and submitting calmly to her fate, the bottle was, after a great deal of trouble, uncorked, and its contents poured liberally over her snowy head. Alas! instead of essence of roses, it proved to have a vile, unsavoury smell; and far from emulating crystal, came forth black, and decidedly muddy. In short, it was the bottle of "Warren's Blacking."

Returning from the bath, I met a crowd standing at a pump in the middle of one of the principal streets, and, in my innocence, imagined they were jostling and squeezing each other so unmercifully, for the purpose of getting a drink of water. I soon discovered, however, that they had gathered round an itinerant auctioneer, who was selling the goods of some

unfortunate native trader on the verge of bankruptcy. I was much struck with the business-like way in which he set to work. Looking fiercely at those who did not bid, his whole soul seemed intent on the sale of the goods before him. He was mounted on the empty trough of the pump, so as to obtain a clearer view of passers-by; and drawing from his waistband a deadly-looking weapon, something between a carving-knife and a dagger, he struck about with it in the most frantic manner, making imaginary stabs and thrusts in every direction. Meanwhile, he bellowed out the Arabic word, "Harage, harage, harage!" and when he had collected a sufficient number of people, he stopped flourishing the knife, and stooping down, cut the cordage that bound the goods together. He then seized the end of a piece of chintz in his left hand, and flung the rest adroitly over the heads of the mob, so as to display its whole length, and allow them to judge of its breadth and quality. The bidding instantly commenced at a ridiculously

low figure, and whilst it proceeded, some few examined the article more closely. Many a hard tussle ensued between the auctioneer and a very resolute bidder, and at last, each seized the chintz, and tried to gain forcible possession of it. At the same time, little boys and girls, and poor men and women, who had more curiosity than money, got pulling about the yet unsold pieces of stuffs that were lying at the auctioneer's feet; and against this encroachment he skilfully defended himself by bringing the handle of the knife into play, catching some of them such smart raps over the knuckles, that they seldom came within reach again. In a short time everything was sold—some at a less, some at a higher value. The money was gathered, the knife sheathed, and the crowd dispersed, leaving the auctioneer to depart at his leisure.

The favourite lounging-places at Beyrout are M. Talon's billiard-rooms and *café*, pleasantly situated on the Marina. The stranger can have no difficulty in finding out this place; for

only two doors from it is M. Talon's shop, and opposite stands M. Talon himself, a very fat man, with an oily complexion, and a conscience of immense dimensions. Wanting to make a purchase, I went into the shop, and Madame waited upon me. Her prices were rather startling, but Beyrout is a very expensive place to live at, and a very easy one to die in. Talon and his wife are exiles from their country, and somebody must pay the piper. There is a rival shop next door, also belonging to a Frenchman. They only agree upon one point, and that is, never to reduce their prices.

In the *café* I found all the late journals, and French papers. I threw myself on a sofa, and was instantly attended to. If a billiard player, a traveller may pass an hour or two here very pleasantly; if not, he may look over some of the more interesting French journals, or see what is going on in the harbour by aid of a very good telescope. It had been blowing fresh all the morning when I was there, and a nasty sea had got up, preventing the steamer,

that came in some hours previously, from landing the mails. The boat, however, was now approaching the shore, and this news soon got abroad, and shoals of people were collecting at the Marina, while the Quarantine officers got a davit rigged to fish up the mail-bag without loss of time. The steamer's boat skimmed lightly over the waves, and was steered by an experienced old naval Lieutenant. She reached the rocks, where the white foam sent a surging spray over all, and for a second or two completely hid her; but in another instant a cheerful shout rang through the air, and all danger was past. The little boat shot rapidly towards the shore, where the water, however, was by no means smooth, and, indeed, would have dashed every soul on board to atoms against the hard, rocky wall that is built up along the sea-side, had it not been for the skilful management of the sailors in using the boat-hooks. By means of a ricketty ladder, the old officer got up to where the Quarantine authorities were ready with iron pincers to re-

ceive his bill of health; and the steamer being, as every one knew, not entitled to pratique, the poor Lieutenant was put into a wooden cage, through the bars of which he was permitted to see some friends, and give and receive the news. The passengers were landed at the Quarantine establishment at Dog River, a couple of hours' pull from where the steamer lay, and where there is never any surf. The quarantine is five days, and has to be passed in a dilapidated building, which in any European country would be considered unfit for a pig-stye.

The Lieutenant only waited for the European mails, and these, after being duly sealed, were lowered into the boat, into which he scrambled, and by miraculous good luck got back in safety to the steamer. The people then dispersed, and made off to the Post-office for letters, while the steamer quickly completed her preparations, and then steered out of the harbour.

Landing at Beyrout is very dangerous in anything approaching stormy weather. Acci-

dents, attended with loss of life, are of frequent occurrence; and not many years ago an officer and eight men, belonging to a frigate in harbour, were stranded on the rocks that encompass the landing-place, and all perished. The harbour also affords but little shelter to shipping; and, on the first indications of a storm, vessels run down to Dog River, where they can lie in perfect security.

From the *café*, I sauntered down towards the extreme point of the Marina, where I came unexpectedly upon a good-looking French girl, making up gentlemen's morning-caps, from very rich stuff of variegated colours, spangled with gold-flowers, which is manufactured solely by natives inhabiting the mountains of Beyrout. Mademoiselle bowed, and stammered out some salutation, which I felt to be an invitation to invest a small sum in her merchandize. Accordingly, I looked over a large assortment, and made several trifling purchases, to the great vexation of Talon's wife, who thinks nobody ought to buy anything of anybody but herself.

She told me plainly that I had been imposed upon, but I found the articles were much cheaper and much better than her own.

On returning to the hotel, I passed by the largest and most respectable ship-broker's in Beyrout—Signor Giacamo Tattarachi. Persons anxious to obtain information as to the movements of the British shipping in harbour, travellers wishing to engage passages from one port to another by English schooners, and merchants wanting to charter vessels, all assemble at Mr. Giacamo's office, and are sure not only of obtaining every requisite information, but of meeting the greatest civility and attention. He is universally respected and esteemed in Beyrout; and as for English captains, there is no saying what would become of them were it not for the attention and care of this good man.

I ordered a horse an hour before dinner, so as to have a good scamper on the sands which lie between the old walled town of Beyrout, and the numerous new country-houses

built and being built. A superb nunnery is in the course of erection here, in which dwell *Les Sœurs de Charité*, whose advent has given great satisfaction to the Catholics of Beyrout. They have established a boarding-school for young ladies, and a day-school for poor girls and Arabs. Persons residing in any part of Syria, who do not wish to be altogether separated from their daughters until they are older and more enlightened, may here, for a very trivial sum, place them out of harm's way, and have them pretty well educated; and the place is so centrally situated, that it is within a few days' journey of the remotest points. They have also set up an hospital, where sailors attacked by fever or any epidemic are kindly nursed and cared for, and the two best doctors at Beyrout attend them.

At a little distance from the nunnery, rises over the trees and foliage that surround it, the belfry of the American Missionary Chapel. Divine service is performed every Sunday morning in English. In the absence of any chap-

lain of the Church of England, most of the Protestants attend this chapel. The missionaries are a very good set of men, and one or two of them extremely clever. There are others, however, who are a little fanatical, labouring under a gloomy conviction of the sinfulness of human nature, who look very wretched and ghost-like, and are much addicted to showing only the white of their eyes. They make very few converts amongst the native population, though their schools have done much to enlighten them, and this, perhaps, is not small success. Strangers are surprised at the numbers of men and boys to be met with in the streets of Beyrout, who speak English as fluently, and pronounce it as well, as an Englishman himself, and this is all owing to these indefatigable missionaries. The ladies have several girls' schools, and there is one doctor and his wife who have twelve or fourteen orphans, whom they have reared almost from infancy, and who I believe are sincere Protestants. They are educated, fed, and clothed at

the private expense of these excellent people, and it is to be hoped that when the girls marry and settle in life, which they will now soon be doing, they will prove very exemplary characters.

On the left hand of the gate that leads up an avenue of pleasant shady trees to the chapel, is an extensive plot of ground, allotted as the last resting-place of the Protestant community, and here an Englishman will invariably pause. To go from stone to stone, and read the names and the epitaphs of those who have passed away, and reflect how many were but sojourners in this land, never intending to remain beyond a certain time, and yet have been suddenly carried off by an accident, or by the virulent Syrian fever, is indeed a melancholy task. I could not but linger at the grave of a little child whose cold remains were only loosely covered with earth, as it was not intended that they should rest permanently in this foreign soil. She was the daughter of the captain of an American bark, who was compelled by contract to make an

intermediate voyage to England ; but the moment he returned, the vessel was to load for New York, and then that little leaden case will be carefully uncovered, and carried to the distant and well-loved home.

Notwithstanding the prevalence of fever, people persist in calling Beyrout healthy. There are seasons of the year, undoubtedly, when the climate is all that could be wished, and I even think Europeans are less exposed to the fever here than at other ports on the coast ; but at other ports you have the chance of recovering and getting over repeated attacks, whereas at Beyrout, the first attack generally terminates fatally.

After a short rest I sauntered through the bazaars, and visited the shops and the sherbet houses. In these last, iced water spins round little tinkling bells, in fountains of glass and china-ware ; and in the coffee-houses are heard the merry sounds of the castanet and the tambourine, while Egyptian dancing-girls, with unexceptionable figures, well-turned ankles, and

tiny feet, with eyes full of fire, but having their faces tattooed and frightfully besmeared with khol, execute their fantastic dance.

Messrs. Scott and Robertson, two British merchants, have established silk-reeling factories on the mountains near Beyrout. Messrs. Figon and Portalis have established French factories, and I believe there are three or four others. The one in best order, and which yields the best return, is M. Figon's factory. M. Figon himself is very young, full of enterprise and spirit, and carries everything before him in the way of his trade. Travellers have generally letters of credit on Mr. James Black, of the firm of W. R. Black and Co., who is a quiet, retired man of business, rather Methodistical, but held in great respect by every one as a strictly honourable man, both in matters connected with business, and in his private character as a gentleman. Mr. Heald is the only other Englishman residing at Beyrout who meddles in bill transactions. He is a kind, obliging man, and has risen in life

entirely through his own perseverance and industry. The following is a list, so far as I can recollect, of the English residing at Beyrout, in 1850, by which it will be observed that quite a little colony has risen up there:

Colonel Rose, British Consul-General; Mr. Moore (the Consul) and his family; Colonel Churchill and family; Captain Newbolt and family; Mr. Scott and family; Mr. Robertson and family; Mr. James Black and family; Mr. and Mrs. Heald; Mrs. Parker and two daughters; Mrs. Mortimer and two daughters; Mr. James A. Riach, Mr. F. Smith, Mr. Lionel Moore, Mr. Parker, Mr. Warrington, and Doctor Thompson.

One or two of the above have since quitted Beyrout, and, by the removal of Colonel Rose, the British have no longer a Consul-General—a decided loss to those residing in Syria, who, in all cases of appeal, must now wait till redress can be obtained from Constantinople or Egypt, under whichever jurisdiction Syria may chance to be placed.

For the better arrangement and more speedy dispatch of business, and for disposing summarily of all disputes connected with commercial matters, a mercantile board has just been established at Beyrout, composed of members of every nationality and creed. The board hear and judge cases according to equity, founded, in some measure, on the general usage. This does away with great delay and trouble, which merchants formerly had in dealings with roguish native or Greek tradesmen, when complaints had to be made to the Pasha, or to the Consul of the delinquent; and, after much annoying litigation, and very unnecessary expense, small satisfaction was ever obtained.

Vessels chartered in England to load on the coast of Syria are obliged to call at Beyrout for orders; so that, in addition to the trade of the place, about as many more vessels, not connected with the port, touch here during the year, making on an average annually about 150 ships bearing the British flag.

Decidedly the greatest nuisance in Beyrout is the existence of the military barracks in the very centre of the town, close to the habitations of some of the most respectable merchants. Next to this I must reckon the hosts of fleas, mosquitoes, &c., in the hotels; but in the private mansions of the better class of inhabitants, continual attention to cleanliness and frequent scrubbing out of every corner have expelled these intruders.

The barrack nuisance commences at eight o'clock, A.M., when two drum-majors range their aspiring pupils in couples all the way down a large room, on either side of a thick deal table, upon which they beat retreats and roll-calls, practising, uninterruptedly, till four o'clock in the afternoon. Meanwhile, there is a fife-major instructing a squadron of young fifers in a peculiarly shrill piece of music, which any one might learn to whistle in half a second, but which they have been at for half a year; and it haunts the audience, waking and sleeping, for the remainder of their days upon earth. Others are hard at

work in the bugle department, and break out into wretched attempts at cavalry calls, but which fail from unmistakable weakness of chest. The perpetual din occasioned by these professors of music produces an effect upon the nervous system not to be described.

Beyrout, from its surrounding scenery, appears to great advantage as a picture, but a residence there is by no means enviable. I left it without a single regret, though with many amusing reminiscences of the ludicrous scenes I witnessed in the temporary inconveniences undergone by others as well as myself.

CHAPTER XIV.

TRIPOLI AND RUAD.

Description of Tripoli—Its gardens and fountains—Fertility of the soil—Character of the Syrians—Doctor N.—The Union Jack—A Consul's consternation—A contrast—The ague—Unpleasant incident—Departure from Tripoli—Arrival at Ruad—Its inhabitants—Enormous cistern—Tortosa.

TRIPOLI is the next seaport town, after passing Beyrout, of any consideration or importance. In a commercial point of view, it is, however, of but small consequence, though celebrated for its manufactures of silk sashes and boshias, which are in great demand

amongst the native population of Syria and parts of Cyprus. A few bales of European goods are landed at the port, just sufficient to meet the demands of the town itself, and the villages in its immediate vicinity. Here the traveller first observes the cultivation, to any extent, of the useful and ornamental mulberry-tree; for, though in Beyrout the silk-worm is reared, the mulberry plantations are situated too far from the town to be discernible to the naked eye, whereas, at Tripoli, they reach almost to the water's edge. The roadstead, though better than that of Beyrout, is very insecure, but the landing-place is far less exposed, and at no time of the year absolutely dangerous for boats. Horned women, as well as horned cattle, are more scarce than at Beyrout; and the only beasts of burden one sees on landing, are mules, donkeys, and porters—the latter the most stubborn and most vile of all.

The passage from Beyrout to Tripoli is not a long one, lasting only six hours. The

native boatmen are more accustomed to Europeans, and even some of the boats are owned by the Syro-European inhabitants of the Syrian ports. Hence they are very civil and obliging, and never deceive you in any way, being fearful of the punishment such deceptions might entail upon them; for in Syria everybody is known, and Europeans (with the single exception of the English) cling together, and act in concert. But this is not the fashion with our own countrymen; and if there were only two Englishmen in the world, and these two were aware that their power and their influence would be irresistible, if exercised in accord with each other, it is very probable that they would not be able to agree. This joint action, however, has a very salutary effect upon the natives, who, knowing the great friendship that exists between Europeans, are disposed to respect everybody with a hat, as, for all they know, the wearer thereof may chance to be a brother or a cousin or a son of somebody they are connected with, or from

whose protecting influence they derive their means of existence. But apart from all this the Syrian is, as far as manners and civility go, naturally a gentleman. He is born more civilized than his neighbours in Palestine and Egypt. By him the outward forms of decorum are well sustained and understood; and the poorest native in the street, is willing to afford the stranger every information or assistance that may lie in his power. Still, under all this polish, he may be the greatest rogue on the face of the earth, and devoid of all principles of honour. This, however, is owing to his want of education, and to the position in which he is placed. The people among whom he moves, the scenes he witnesses, and the villanies he is himself exposed to, graft on his naturally honourable disposition an inclination to evil. Were he placed in another sphere, free from the corrupt influences now surrounding him, he would, with his innate good-nature, become an ornament to society.

On landing at Tripoli, I stepped from the

boat into the quarantine doctor's house, having come from an unsuspected port entitled to uninterrupted intercourse. The range of buildings by the water's edge are principally storehouses and public offices. The inhabitants live about two miles further inland, where the real town of Tripoli is situated.

After the usual scuffle with porters and Custom-house people, I asked for the residence of the illustrious Signor Catziflis, the British Vice-Consul; and no sooner had the words escaped my lips, than, as if by magic, I was beset by youths of most unprepossessing appearance, who for various small considerations offered to conduct me to the official residence of the representative of my Sovereign. My boat companion, this trip, was a learned oculist, a member of the Royal College of Physicians, who had married and settled in France, but who, grievously lacking that *sine quâ non* of comfort and luxury, vulgarly termed money, and by the doctor himself called *mopusses*, had quitted his wife and children for this land of

promise, now said to be flowing, not with milk and honey, but with gold and silver.

Doctor N——'s talents as an oculist were indisputable. Nature, moreover, had formed him a perfect Adonis, and education had fitted him to move in Courts. He was a perfect gentleman in manners; a brilliant wit in conversation; an adept in the art he professed; and a fervent disciple of Æsculapius. He had been decorated by half the sovereigns of Europe, and was furnished with unexceptionable testimonials and credentials. He was fond of the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and to the horror and alarm of the quiet-going Consular fraternity of Tripoli, entered that port with a British Union Jack flying from the mast-head—a flag never hoisted by foreign vessels, unless to indicate the fact of some very great man being on board. But what ambassador, or prince, or noble stranger would voyage in an open Arab boat? This idea never struck Signor Catziflis, and the commotion created by our arrival was intense. Silver-headed sticks came down to

meet us, Signor Consoli being too busy in making preparations at home to receive the noble *incognito* on the beach. We marched in regular procession nearly up to the knees in sand for about ten minutes, till we reached a solitary-looking gate, situated in the centre of a wilderness of sand. This was termed the Asses' Gate —Bab il Jaish; and here the doctor's pride suffered a fall, in consequence of the Consular interpreter requesting *him*, whose decorations and honours might be termed legion, to mount one of the many long-eared donkeys that were stationed at the gate for the accommodation of passengers to and from the town. The day was hot; the walk unshaded, and very sandy, besides being very lengthy; therefore I made no hesitation in accepting the polite offer of a small boy who had a donkey to let. The doctor laughed at the ridiculous figure I cut on so mean a quadruped; but I consoled myself with the happy thought of a turkey, in perspective, for dinner, which turkey, a gift of Niven Kerr Esq., her Majesty's Consul at Rhodes (then of Cyprus),

had been duly cooked at Beyrout, and was now following me to the consulate.

My contentment, however, was of short duration, for my donkey stumbled just as we were entering the town, and I was thrown down a pit, which, had it been composed of anything but sand, might have proved my grave. As it was, I received little hurt beyond a good shaking, and my greatest difficulty was how to get up again. The more I endeavoured to scramble up the side, the more the loose sand and earth gave way under my weight, and at each effort I had the gratification of plumping down to the very bottom.

"Sed revocare gradum,
Superasque evadere ad Auras
Hic labor, hoc opus est."

A friendly Samaritan, in the shape of a muleteer, threw me down the end of a rope, and clinging tightly to this, I reached the surface again.

Mr. Catziflis, when he discovered that it

was no prince that had honoured him with a visit, was extremely disgusted. He may boast of being the most inhospitable man in that hospitable country; for all the travellers I ever met, complained of him, and of him alone. He had a fine old house, on the walls of which were inscribed the names of very many travellers who had passed through in the lifetime of Catziflis's ancestors. Some dates were so far back as 1757, nearly a century ago. Madame Catziflis, senior, was duly presented; and we found her a very plain-looking old lady, covered from head to foot with gold ornaments. She is addicted to chewing mastic, and spitting on the floor. In the course of our visit, Mr. and Mrs. Catziflis, junior, also made their appearance. The two brothers are twins, and so exactly resemble each other, that a Comedy of Errors is being continually enacted. I could not guess how even their own wives could distinguish the one from the other. They are the same height, same complexion, same features, same voice, same size in every respect, and

have each the same respective pimple at the tip of their respective noses. Mr. Catziflis, junior, is the Austrian Vice-Consul. He married for love—his brother for money; and the result is that Mrs. Catziflis, senior, is, as I have already said, very plain, while Mrs. Catziflis, junior, is a paragon of beauty—in fact, has been the most celebrated beauty of her day, which, alas! when I visited Tripoli was on the decline. She is the sister of our Vice-Consul at Latachia Moisi Elias; and the charms of "Cette Hanee," or Lady Jane (for Cette means Lady, and Hanee Jane) had given a theme to many an Oriental poet. On the occasion of her marriage, a poet, who was one of her lovers, addressed to her the following stanzas, which, humble as are their claims to attention, I have endeavoured to put into English:

"Daughter of Eve,
In that dark, loving eye,
Can man believe,
Or does its magic try

Simply to lure the hapless lover's gaze,
Then to scorch up his hopes and fill his days
With endless misery and bitter pain?
Surely thou art not such, fair Lady Jane!

"Thou art now bride,
And none would dare to seek
To wound thy pride,
Or hurt thy soul so meek.
Yet, gentle lady, let the hopeless pray
That those black gazelle eyes be turned away
In meeting others; for, alas! 'tis vain
To hope or seek for love, fair Lady Jane."

My companion, the doctor, gulping down his wrath at the cool reception given him by Signor Catziflis, who, with very many apologies, told him that he deeply regretted his house being under repair, and the impossibility of offering him a room, very quietly inquired if he might borrow a clean table-cloth, which request being acceded to, our turkey was produced, and sundry bottles of port and sherry, and we feasted upon the same, to the

no small annoyance of our inhospitable host, who, however, on being invited, condescended to join us, and certainly lent a willing appetite in consuming the good things set before him. After this *déjeúné à la fourchette*, we took our leave, and repaired to the Latin convent, where, Doctor N—— being a Catholic, easy admission was gained.

Tripoli is the general rendezvous for travellers wishing to visit Lebanon; and there were no less than forty gentlemen and ladies assembled there, at the period of our arrival. I made the acquaintance of one party, a Captain in the British army, his wife and step-daughter. They had come all the way from Egypt by land, and were reposing for a few days, after their fatigues and toils, in a delicious orange-garden, under their own tents; for at the convent of Tripoli no ladies are admitted. Monsieur Perritié, the French Consul, had kindly allotted them this spot. His civilities to English travellers can never be sufficiently lauded; and, placed as they are in juxta-position

to the ill-concealed Arab bearishness of Signor Catziflis, our own Vice-Consul, they are all the more appreciated.

M. Perritié had served in the Greek army at Athens—I believe he was in the cavalry—and it so happened that he remembered my companion, Dr. N——, who had acquired not only fame, but honours, at Athens. The consequence was, that he invited us to dinner; and a very sumptuous one he gave us. An attack of ague, however, to which I was then very subject, spoiled my appetite, and I had hardly tasted the soup ere I began to shake and tremble like an aspen-leaf. I was obliged to leave the table; and hot lemonade, punch, and even champagne, were sent me to my room, where I lay extended on a sofa in all the miseries entailed by ague.

There is one very extraordinary sensation that invariably accompanies the ague in Syria, and for which I have never been able to obtain any satisfactory explanation — a feeling as though your legs and arms had been changed

into lead, and had become too ponderous for the body to bear, or one's strength to raise. I endeavoured to turn, but found it impossible; and at the same time my brain seemed to whirl with confusion.

Tripoli, like Damascus, is one garden of fruit-trees and flower-shrubs. Fountains and rivulets are met in all directions. The Tripoli ladies, too, are celebrated for their extreme beauty, competing even with Damascene Venuses. A stranger, however, seldom has the chance of getting even a glimpse of their many charms, as, for some unaccountable reason, though the Christian population equals, if it do not exceed, the Mahometan, the women are as much muffled up, and hidden from public gaze, as ever were the wives of the Prophet himself. In my case, there was an exception made, as apart from my knowledge of the language, and my acquaintance with many of the friends of Tripoli families, who were married and settled in other parts of Syria, my companion, the doctor, was glad to make use

of my services as interpreter in the many daily visits he made to the suffering fair of Tripoli; and by this means I gained ready admission into the Mutzellim's harem, where I saw many beautiful faces, but none equal to that of his own daughter, a patient of the doctor's, about fifteen years of age. The natural brilliancy of her lovely eyes were dimmed by incipient glaucoma, which would inevitably in the course of a few years have entirely blinded the poor girl. The doctor's remedies were sharp and mortifying; yet, though quivering with pain, she never uttered a complaint. In a week's time, the malady was entirely cured.

Tripoli is celebrated, and justly so, for the excellence and the cheapness of its wines. The convent produces wine equal to any claret that is imported into Syria; and I bought a gallon of capital table-wine for sixty paras, or about three halfpence.

There are no European residents at Tripoli, with the exception of the French Consul and Monsieur Bereau. The latter was for many

years resident at Antioch in the capacity of Medical Officer and Director of the Quarantine. Diplomas—at least veritable ones—are not required in the Turkish medical service; for though latterly the Board of Health at Constantinople has undertaken to scrutinize any appplicant's pretensions, I can with safety state, that I have about as much legal right to be Archbishop of Canterbury as one half of the medicos in the Turkish service have any pretension to be what they profess.

Oranges from Tripoli are shipped in feluccas to all parts of Syria. Their delicious smell is only to be equalled by the taste; and the Tripolitans pride themselves much upon their excellent method of candying, not only the fruit, but also the blossom.

Tripoli is a charming place, abounding with beautiful gardens and water-jets, and in fact everything that art and nature can furnish to render man happy during his brief sojourn upon earth. The inhabitants, however, are neglectful

of their own comfort, and have suffered heaps of filth and stagnant pools to invade their very gates; and fever, that bane of the East, has planted itself on the marshy plains round the town, poisoning the fragrance that rises from the sweet-smelling flowers.

I left Dr. N—— revelling over a case of chronic corneitas, which required some severe operation; and though he begged me to delay my departure till I should see the result of his skill, I was sick and tired of what I had already witnessed — from malignant fever to simple ophthalmia—and I resisted all his persuasions.

A little boat, a little sail, and a little breeze, enabled me to reach the island of Ruad at daybreak the morning after my departure from Tripoli. It is a wonderful little island, rising up suddenly out of the sea, and is as densely populated as any ant-hill. The four thousand inhabitants live and thrive, and get rich, and get married, and have families, and die; but

there is not a span of cultivated land on the rock, nor do they possess one spring of water to quench their thirst.

Ruad is the Gosport of the Levant. None but sailors and their families dwell there, and consequently they are not subjected to taxes, except such as the Governor of Ruad may think fit to impose. The Governor is very similar to a President in a Republic, being an old seaman himself, and chosen to fill his post by the inhabitants, who, at every election, forward to the Government authorities residing at Latachia the name and standing of their choice. This, however, is a mere form; and, in point of fact, Ruad is as independent as the United States.

On landing at Ruad, the stranger is surprised to meet so vast a number of females, and so very few men. What is more curious still, though Ruad has not a single Christian inhabitant, the women go about unveiled, and are not only willing, but delighted to enter into conversation with strangers.

The greatest sight in Ruad is the cistern

which contains the annual supply of water. It is a huge building, covering a space of about fifty square yards; and is so ingeniously constructed, that the water is never allowed to remain in an undisturbed state for a single instant. The method adopted to keep up a continual movement is simple in the extreme. At one side of the reservoir is a flour-mill, worked by a water-mill. The mill is sunk perhaps twenty feet lower than the cistern, but the wheel, which works on paddles, is on a level with that part of the wall where the water is permitted to exude. Rude wooden conduits, placed on a level with the central grade of the wheel, so conduct its operations, that at the same time that the weight of the water gives an impetus to the paddles of the wheel, these paddles, as they arrive in a parallel position with the conduits, throw the water that has forced them into operation into these ducts, which reconduct it into the reservoir; so that hardly a drop is lost, except what is absorbed by the paddles of the wheel.

During the winter months, feluccas are employed in bringing water and fuel from Tortosa, a miserable looking ruin, which forms a species of cape opposite to Ruad, still abounding with fallen castles and fortresses; but where only the owl and the jackal now locate. Tortosa also yields wood, of which boats and even ships are constructed at Ruad; and amongst the Syrian craft, those built at Ruad have decidedly the pre-eminence, owing not only to the excellence of the timber, but also to the known and acknowledged superiority of the builders.

CHAPTER XV.

Gibili—Sultan Ibrahim—Tobacco-packers—The Mutzellim—Monsieur R——.

COASTING along from Ruad and Tortosa, I arrived at the pretty little town of Gibili, or, as it is called, Sultan Ibrahim, from the fact of one of the Sultans having abdicated his throne, and retired to this quiet, secluded spot, where he devoutly passed the remainder of his days in prayers and almsgiving. There is a grotto by the sea-side, in which this Sultan is said to have lived twenty years, and which in consequence is much reverenced by devout Moslems. Sultan Ibrahim erected a mosque

at Gibili, and an almshouse. In the former he is said to have been buried; and from the lofty minaret, when early dawn first appears, the Turks are reminded of this fact, and urged to walk in the virtuous paths of the exemplary monarch.

Maundrell, in his journey from Aleppo to Jerusalem, performed in 1697, notices the existence of the ruins of a fine Roman theatre at Gibili. Of this I could find no trace in 1850. Probably its stones have been used for the construction of more modern buildings; for Gibili is now a town of considerable size, and is much frequented by small vessels, owing to the excellent shelter its little harbour affords. I never saw a more picturesque little place in my life. It is like a model on a very small scale of the celebrated harbour at Trincomalee, in the island of Ceylon.

On approaching Gibili seawards, I could not distinguish the least vestige of a town, or anything but black and gloomy rocks, against which our little boat was apparently destined

to be dashed. On closing in with the shore, we could just distinguish a little opening amongst them; and making direct for this, I was suddenly delighted and surprised, on turning round a large rock, at coming suddenly into calm, smooth water, in a pretty little harbour, where a crowd of boats were at anchor, in perfect security from the squall that agitated the open sea, and to escape from which we had run into Gibili.

I jumped on shore and walked into the town, accompanied by the Arab Reis, who was a native of Gibili, and, consequently, a capital *cicerone*. The inhahitants were very civil to me, though the appearance of an European amongst them is rather a rare occurrence. Still, from the proximity of Gibili to Latachia, the natives have continual intercourse with the Europeans residing there, and both respect and fear them. I looked in at the window of the mosque; but, with the exception of a devout old man at prayers, saw nothing worthy of notice. Maundrell mentions having seen candle-

sticks and altar furniture of great value, which had been brought here after the sacking of Cyprus, being the spoil of some Christian church; but these, if they ever existed, have now disappeared, and were probably long since appropriated by some one of the many Mutzellims or Governors of the place. I strolled over the town, and saw all that was to be seen. The surrounding country consists of very fertile fields and some few mulberry gardens.

Gibili is celebrated all over the East for the very excellent tobacco it produces; the Gibili and the Aboo Reah, or father of essences, being the finest and most aromatic tobacco in the world. Great care and attention are paid to its cultivation, as it is a certain source of revenue to the cultivator. The ground is thickly covered with goats' manure, and the fields more or less watered, according as the produce is required to be of a strong or mild nature. The less water that is used, the stronger becomes the tobacco. When the crop is gathered in, the leaves are exposed to the

dew for three successive nights; and then, being threaded together, they are hung up to dry in the shade, and, when dry, packed in gunny bag cloth bales, and sold to merchants in Latachia, who warehouse the bales in magazines secure from damp. By them it is finally exported into Egypt. The culture of tobacco of itself opens a little commerce with the town of Latachia, and in fine weather the little port of Gibili is swarming with feluccas, occupied in transporting the tobacco from Gibili to Latachia.

Fruit is abundant at Gibili. There are many fountains of excellent water, and, in addition to this, its inhabitants breathe a pure, untainted atmosphere, and fevers are almost entirely unknown. In my opinion, the port of Gibili could, at a very little expense, be made an excellent harbour of refuge for vessels of considerable tonnage, and such an harbour on the coast of Syria would be a very great acquisition.

I called on the Mutzellim, who received me

with great politeness, and offered me the use of his own horse if I should wish to proceed by land to Latachia, an offer that I at once joyfully accepted, especially as there were two French gentlemen of my acquaintance who were going the same way, and would be my companions. The boat sailed for Latachia with my traps during the night, and my companions and I started at daylight, intending to profit as much as possible by the cooler hours of the morning. The ride along the sea-side would have been extremely pleasant, but M. R——, who was a martyr to the gout, could not be induced to put his horse out of a walk, so that we were pretty well scorched by the sun, and almost blinded by the glare of the sea-shore before we got to Latachia. M. R—— was also in a bad humour, which made our journey still less agreeable.

CHAPTER XVI.

Latachia — Turkish fanatics — Attack on the Latin Monastery—Cruel persecution of Christians—Their character and condition—Ignorance of the population —An eccentric Consul—A frail widow—Laodicea.

On entering Latachia we met one of its semi-European inhabitants, who was a Consular Agent, and, we soon found, a great politician. Though a perfect stranger, he accosted us, and, after the usual welcome, begged to be informed what was our latest political news. M. R——, in his irritable mood, was so incensed at being asked such a question at a moment's notice, that he turned very sharply upon the unfor-

tunate querist, and told him, in no very gentle terms, that the only news he had to communicate was, that we were too tired and weary to stop and talk to political busy-bodies; and so we got rid of him.

The environs of Latachia are extremely beautiful, and abound with delicious apricot and peach trees. Mulberry plantations and vineyards are also very plentiful; and the melon and water-melon here attain great perfection. The dark-leafed pomegranate, with its deep vermillion blossoms, intertwines with its fairer neighbour the orange tree, and behind them rises the stately poplar, over which peeps the more stately minaret, making altogether a charming picture.

On entering the town, I passed a range of lofty, handsome-looking buildings, inhabited principally by the Consular Agents, as was announced by the many tall flag-staffs erected on the terraces, from which waved the flags of England, France, Italy, Russia, Spain, and even Sweden and Denmark. On Sundays and

holidays, these flags give Latachia a very gay appearance, and are looked up at with pride and delight by the Christian inhabitants, and regarded with equal aversion by the Turks.

The Turkish inhabitants of Latachia have now for many years been accustomed to be jostled every day by their European neighbours, and most of the Turkish merchants are in daily intercourse with European shipmasters and merchants, while the port is continually full of European vessels, and constantly visited by European travellers, yet they are without exception the most fanatical set existing in any part of Turkey or Syria, and carry their intolerance to such an extent, that they have on several occasions burst through all bounds, and, reckless of the consequences, have collected in mobs, attacked and maltreated European and native Christians, and absolutely compelled them to seek refuge from their ruffianly attacks by flight to the island of Ruad, where, notwithstanding the fact of their being not one single Christian inhabitant, the less fanatical

and more kindly-disposed people have shown every attention to the temporary exiles.

An instance of this occurred not more than three years ago. The Roman Catholic inhabitants had gone to mass in the chapel built within the walls of the Latin monastery, when, in the middle of the service (the doors of the monastery being luckily closed), they heard, to their great alarm, a furious knocking and shouting outside of the convent walls. The gates were immediately barred and secured by the frightened priests and congregation, and, on reconnoitreing from the upper rooms, it was discovered that a dense mob of bigoted and ruffianly Turks, who were escorting a renegade Christian to one of their mosques, had, at this villain's instigation, formed the diabolical project of attacking the defenceless Christians in the church, and without regard to sex or age, slaughtering them all in cold blood. The Catholics were instantly seized with panic. In a very short space the gate must give way to the repeated and heavy blows of the frantic

Turks; and there was no chance of safety but in flight. They piled up the benches and seats of the church, so as to enable a man to enter one of the windows of the French Consulate; and a ladder was then let down, which enabled the others to scramble up. Hence they passed through the back door of the garden attached to the Consulate, and effected their escape to the sea-side, where, procuring boats, the whole party embarked and put to sea, determining to remain at Ruad till protection could be procured from Beyrout.

A French man-of-war anchored in a few days off Latachia, and demanded and obtained instant satisfaction for the outrage. The ringleaders were publicly bastinadoed, and carried off on board this very vessel to Constantinople, to be from thence sent into exile. The scared Christians then returned to their respective homes. The walls and gate of the convent have since been very materially strengthened, so that it can now afford temporary refuge in cases of urgent necessity. This has been a good and

lasting lesson to the Turks, who are afraid to commit further violence. They are, however, still very insolent to Christians, and I should never feel altogether secure at Latachia, so long as many of the present Ayans and Effendis are permitted to carry on their intrigues and machinations with impunity.

Latachia has much improved under the wise government of the present Sultan. An old inhabitant told me, that not more than twenty years ago the greatest barbarities were practised upon Christians, and even Europeans, for the purpose of extorting money from them. He assured me, on his honour, that a scene had occurred in his own family, which, for refined cruelty and barbarity, certainly has not its equal. His father or his uncle, I forget which, was an extensive merchant at Latachia. On one occasion, as was then often the case, the local Governor was in want of a considerable sum of money, which he was resolved to obtain by fair means or foul. His peculations had been brought under the notice of the Pasha,

and, in consequence of them, the treasury was said to be in a very crippled state. In this dilemma he sent a peremptory message to M. G—— that the Government required of him a loan of money to a very considerable amount. Old G—— knew that if it once fell into the clutches of the Government he might bid adieu to his money for ever, and consequently he refused complying with the request, on the plea of poverty and misfortune in trade. At midnight there was a violent knocking at his door, and on the door being opened, the Governor, attended by numerous soldiers, entered the room, and old G—— was seized and gagged, and then threatened with death if he did not immediately comply with the Governor's request. The old man resolutely refusing, he was instantly pinioned, and in the loose folds of his large Oriental trousers, two cats were introduced, on which the soldiers fell-to with their scourges, and beat them most unmercifully, which caused them, in their futile efforts to escape, to literally

tear the old man to pieces. At last, they made a large rent in his clothes, and effected their escape, though not till M. G——, overcome by his sufferings, handed his keys to the Governor, who carried off every farthing he had in the house. M. G—— died from the effects of this torture, but I believe that his successors, in more auspicious days, recovered the money, and some indemnity for the injury sustained.

The native Christians of Latachia are a very ignorant race, much disheartened and subdued by the oppressive yoke of their Turkish masters. Still, they are a well-meaning people, excessively simple in their mode of living. Occupied during the day in the arduous labours of the field, they generally go to bed at sunset, and are up with the lark. Their information is of the most limited kind, and their conversation almost invariably turns on money or edibles. They are temperate in their habits, and seldom addicted to spirits or strong drink. On Sundays and feast days, when the weather does

not permit of rural sports, they gather round one more learned than the rest, who is just master of his alphabet, and can manage to read a chapter in the Bible, to which they all listen with devout attention. The story of Joseph has for them peculiar interest. They enter into it with their whole hearts. They know by name the places he visited, and can understand the allusions to merchants, and camels, and slaves, with which they are brought in contact every day. They sympathize with Joseph in all his reverses, and rejoice in all his good fortune. They know what famine is, for it has been too often in their own dwellings; and they would be well satisfied to see Pharaoh's political economy adopted in the Ottoman empire, when they would have nothing to do, in time of dearth, but to put two empty sacks on a donkey's back, and go and get as much wheat as they required. They feel outrageous at the conduct of Potiphar's wife, and those of the listeners who are of a jealous temper think of home, and of the expediency of administering

to their wives a little gentle correction when they get there, merely as a measure of precaution; for the Syrians consider the practice of beating their wives perfectly allowable, and necessary to their peace and comfort.

The Syrians have but a limited knowledge of geography. The chart of the world depicted in their mind's eye, consists of Constantinople, Egypt, Syria, Cyprus, and various remote islands, situated in the centre of a vast ocean. From these islands all Franks are presumed to come. They consider the nations of the earth to consist of the Jews, the Turks, the Egyptians, the Syrians, and the Franks, who, according to their notions, form one empire, speak one tongue, and are of one religion. As for the different flags, they ascribe this variety solely to the conflicting tastes of the different Consular Agents.

It is a custom very prevalent, and naturally so amongst the Christians of Syria, to distinguish European Consuls and residents by their

Christian names, instead of their surnames. This may be attributed in a great measure to the fact of their having no surnames amongst themselves, as also to the greater facility with which Christian names can be pronounced, being mostly all familiar to the ear, from their frequent repetition in the Old and New Testaments. Moreover, many of the Consular Agents have been born and reared in Syria, and the natives have known them from their childhood, and grown acquainted with their Christian names when boys. Those of foreign origin have generally names wholly beyond the reach of Arab pronunciation, and this strengthens the preference given to Christian names. My friend, Bruno Michel, the Austrian Vice-Consul, is never known by any other name at Latachia than that of Howaja Bruno (Mr. Bruno). His uncle, the French Consul, Lucien Geofroy, is always called the Consul Lucien. The only Englishman residing at Latachia, who was agent for the 'Grand Turk' steamer, poor Joseph

Bennett, one of the sons of the late Chaplain to the Embassy, since dead, used, to his annoyance, to be addressed as Howaja Yusuf.

I heard an anecdote in reference to this usage, which may be worth relating. An English gentleman residing at Aleppo, had, in the course of one of his annual mercantile visits to Latachia, occasion to stop at a village some three hours distance from the town. He was lodged at the house of the Kekiah, or chief of the Christian villagers, who was a very old man, and in his youth lived many years at Latachia as a servant of Mr. Daniel Beaumaster, then British Consul for the Levant Company at Latachia. The deeds and the exploits of this eccentric Consul were still the theme of the old Kekiah's conversation; and on the present occasion, he amused his English guest by recounting so much as he recollected of them, at the end of each anecdote pausing to apostrophize the defunct Consul with such exclamations as "Mashallah! he was a great man—a

very great man!" He recounted, amongst other things, how Mr. Beaumaster had created a great sensation by the introduction of a carriage and carriage-horses, with which he used to drive about, to the intense amazement of the natives. There were many other anecdotes, which, however amusing to his auditors, did not say much for Mr. Beaumaster's reputation. Notwithstanding this, however, an open-mouthed Arab gaby, one of his many auditors, who had been listening with intense interest to the recital, when the old man had finished, asked him in Arabic, whether this Daniel that he had been talking of, was Daniel the Prophet, of whom he had read in the Bible. "Jash ebn Jash!" replied the old man. "You ass, the son of a donkey. It is Daniel the great Consul, and not Daniel the Prophet, I have been talking of; for the latter has been dead for thousands of years, whereas the former died only half a century ago."

Moisi Elias, the British Vice-Consul, and

Hadji Jacob Elias, his brother, are very hospitable and good men. At the time of my first making their acquaintance, they were both married, and had each a very amiable wife. But that scourge, the cholera, on its passage through Syria in 1848, made them both widowers at one stroke. They have built a very handsome house in the suburbs of the town, and are flourishing tobacco-merchants. This is instantly apparent to their visitors on entering their dwellings, as a noisy set of packers are continually at work in the yard, beating and cleansing, and packing the tobacco ready for exportation to Egypt. Moisi Elias has taken unto himself another wife, a very beautiful woman, and herself a widow. Cette Bederall was the young relict of one out of seven brothers, Ionians, established at Latachia, and who are all very respectable, quiet young people, and one is the Vice-Consul for the United States. Their peace and tranquillity were sadly interrupted by the death of the husband of the present Madame Elias, leaving his widow

and two young children dependent on them for support. Still they cheerfully bore up against this misfortune, resolved to act like Christians and brothers; but lo! one morning, to their dismay, the young widow was not forthcoming; and on search being made, it was discovered that she had eloped with the favoured Mr. Elias, and had been privately married by a priest, in the gardens belonging to some member of the family. Her husband had been hardly three months dead; and while thus scandalizing his memory, the lady had carried off all her jewellery and valuables, leaving her children to get through the world as they best might, without either money or parents. A law-suit was set on foot by the brothers, to recover the property, and it was still pending when I quitted Syria.

Latachia contains upwards of a dozen mosques, each endeavouring to surpass the others in the beauty of its architecture, and the quaint elegance of its cupolas and minarets. The other public edifices and buildings are also

fine structures, and the gardens teem with rich-scented flowers and shrubs Water, however, though abundant, is extremely unpalatable, and only fit to be used for culinary or fertilising purposes. The inhabitants are compelled to send daily to a village named Basnada, about six miles from Latachia, where the pure water of a rivulet is put into large earthen jars or chatties, as they are called in India, four of which form a load for a donkey. An artesian well would be a great acquisition to the town, and a French engineer, M. Clement, assured me that a capital well might be sunk at a very trivial expense, in comparison to the benefit it would confer, and might, with the aid of simple machinery, be rendered very serviceable in irrigating the land.

The climate of Latachia is extremely good, and, were sufficient attention paid to the cleanliness of the town, fever would hardly be known. Native indolence, however, has converted it into a nucleus of pestilence. The skins of fruit, vegetables unfit for market, rats

destroyed indoors, and dead dogs and cats, are all disposed of by being thrown into the streets, and there they are permitted to remain till the atmosphere becomes fetid. Mr. Guarantee, the doctor of the quarantine, has vainly endeavoured to do away with this evil. The Governor, as all Turks invariably do, readily accedes to his wishes, and signifies his approval by that brief Turkish monosyllable "Peki," "very good," while he touches the side of his turban with his hand; but, beyond this, little is ever done. Once some men were sent to sweep the streets, and they kept them clean for a couple of days or so. The way they went to work was characteristic. They swept down one street till they came to a crossing, and there they left the mass of filth piled up in a heap; another set sweeping down another street did the same; so that in a short space of time the crossings were completely blocked up, and then the workmen imagined they had accomplished their task, and left rather an increased than a diminished

nuisance, in the shape of a mass of collected filth and corruption, which, in this condensed form, was beyond all endurance.

The finest sight in Latachia is the harbour, called the port of Laodicea, and which is still frequented by vessels of a certain tonnage. It is computed that this port could once have held with ease six hundred vessels; but time and warfare and earthquakes, have sadly crippled its utility and beauty. Rocks and walls and buildings have toppled over and filled it up, and though its basin is still very spacious, many hidden dangers lie beneath its waters, and not more than thirty vessels, averaging from two hundred and fifty to three hundred tons, can find safe and convenient holding ground. The entrance will not admit of more than one vessel entering at a time. In a room of an old ruined tower, at the summit of one of the huge blocks of rock that lie at the entrance, a miserable oil lamp is nightly lit, to act as a beacon to vessels arriving in the night.

The landing-place at Latachia is very nicely

constructed, and roofed in as a protection from heat and rain. This is the great resort of idlers during the day time. There are two large *cafés* close by, which supply coffee and smoking materials; and the merchants' offices, the Custom-house, the quarantine, and the Post-office, are in the immediate neighbourhood.

In the autumn months, fleets of boats collect in the vicinity of Latachia to fish for sponges, which are here very plentiful, and of excellent quality. The divers employed in this fishery are very powerful men, whose extraordinary retention of breath is perfectly amazing to strangers. I have seen these men, after a lengthy and persevering hunt under water, reappear on the surface with the blood gushing from their nostrils in perfect jets. Sharks are not very abundant on the coast of Syria, but isolated cases occur of these unhappy men falling victims to them.

For the accommodation of travellers and strangers, a Greek, who speaks French, and was for some time in the service of the French

Consul-General at Beyrout, has established a sort of inn, where one can be accommodated with bed and board at a very trifling expense. Mr. Tanous, as this Boniface is named, is a very civil and obliging man, and does his best to please his guests.

The European society of Latachia is rather limited, but some of its members are well-informed and even talented. The cleverest man beyond dispute, is Dr. Guarantee, a Roman by birth, who is a shrewd observer, and deeply read in the classics and history. The Europeans have nightly *réunions* at each others' houses, where all the news is discussed, and occasionally a little music indulged in. Latachia has but one European belle, Mademoiselle B——, who having been educated in France, possessed the, in Syria, rare accomplishments of skill on the pianoforte, and of singing very sweetly in French and Italian. Such a *rara avis* is, of course, the object of great competition and rivalry, but I believe the palm of her good graces and love are awarded to a delicate young

gentleman, a cousin of her own, who can write and read his own name in French and Arabic—and very little else.

Sportsmen find ample occupation and amusement at Latachia. Bruno Michel, the Austrian Vice-Consul, is a crack shot, and will walk any unaccustomed shooter into a fit of ague, in what he terms a pleasant morning's promenade after a covey of partridges.

The import trade of Latachia is in the hands of merchants residing at Beyrout and Aleppo. Everything depends upon the state of the markets. If cotton-twist be in demand, and at Aleppo the demand is equally firm, then Beyrout merchants supply that article, and *vice versâ* if it be the contrary. Some few have established a direct correspondence with London, but the quantity of goods thus imported is very trifling indeed.

There is little doubt that Latachia would rise considerably in commercial importance, could the road between that town and Aleppo be by any means improved, and made less dangerous

for camels. At present, the mountains are so steep, and the roads so slippery in winter, that camel-drivers always give the preference to Scanderoon, nor can they be induced, except at exorbitant rates, to bring goods down to Latachia.

Living and house-rent are very moderate, but in July, 1848, when the cholera spread panic all over Aleppo, Latachia was so crammed with families who had run away from town, that householders put their own prices on houses, so that many a man got more by renting his house for a week to some opulent Aleppo family, than he could ever hope to gain at any other period by letting it for a whole year.

Latachia is on the whole a very pretty town, and well worth the trouble of a visit. Laodicea, its ancient predecessor, was one of the seven churches.

"*And unto the Angel of the Church of the Laodiceans write; these things saith Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God.*

"I know thy works; that thou art neither cold nor hot; I would thou wert cold or hot.

"So, then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

"Because thou sayest I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched and miserable, and poor and blind, and naked.

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eye-salve, that thou mayest see.

*"As many as I love I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent."**

Such is the merciful warning held forth to this Church; but the candlestick of Laodicea,

* Rev. Chap. III.

has long since been removed, and the luke-warmness turned into coolness and neglect. The temple of God no longer exists, whilst the false Prophet's children have erected a host of minarets, to proclaim to the world that the famed Laodicea is now groaning under the yoke of the usurping sons of Islam.

CHAPTER XVII.

Route to Antioch—A pleasant companion—Sport in the mountains—A mountain village—Gathering of the villagers—The story of the Two Brothers.

NOTHING can be more delightful than travelling over the mountains of Latachia, through the wild and romantic scenery that surrounds the pathway leading towards Sileucia and Antioch, especially if one happen to be accompanied by agreeable companions, who can admire and enjoy the charms of nature.

I was particularly fortunate in this respect. Brouchie, a native of France, a noble-hearted, generous, well-educated man, and an excellent

sportsman to boot, had latterly established himself and his family at Antioch, and was returning thither from Latachia at the same period as myself. Right merry did we determine to make ourselves *en route*. We had a plentiful supply of edibles and drinkables, with a stock of the best Gibili tobacco—that chief of Syrian luxuries. We had good horses, good dogs, and good guns; and in our travelling pack very goodly carpets, mattresses, pillows, and coverlets, whereon to stretch our weary limbs at night, and repose in luxurious comfort. We were both experienced in Eastern travelling, and knew well how to provide against the inconveniences of a long land journey.

Thus armed and equipped, we took leave of Latachia and our many acquaintances established there, and rode forth from the old gate one hour after noon, intending to make the first day's stage a short one of only four hours.

The heat was rather oppressive for the first hour or so, as we were during that period

traversing a large tract of corn-fields; but so soon as we struck off the plains into the pleasant shady pathway leading up the long range of mountains, we began to inhale the delightful cool sea-breeze, and our spirits revived under its influence.

Partridges and hares now became plentiful; and Brouchie and myself were too well employed in following up the sport to think of anecdote or conversation. There were precipices before us, and apparently insurmountable rocks and clefts, over and up which we clambered with the utmost facility, hot in the pursuit of a wounded partridge or a crippled hare, though I am sure that we should have thought, in our cooler moments, nothing except a goat would ever attempt to scale them. As it was, we got some awkward bruises, and were dreadfully scratched by brambles and thistles, but these were trifles in such a chase, and we were compensated for all when we bagged the game. Hares and fat partridges

were slaughtered unsparingly, and it was long ere, satiated with sport, we sat down and counted our spoil, exulting over it as misers over a sack of doubloons.

Brouchie, as a keen sportsman, was vexed to find that he had bagged so many hen partridges, but I consoled him with the assurance that such havoc could but rarely have been made in these wild and unfrequented mountains. After a short halt, we rose from our incumbent posture and mounted our nags again. My companion amused me as we rode off, by referring to the execrable French spoken by a countryman of mine, whose acquaintance he had chanced to make last year at Antioch. "He joined me," said Brouchie, "on an expedition somewhat similar to the present—a journey to kill time and as much game as we could manage. My first shot was at a frankolin —that delicious bird, unknown in our own countries. My first cap had snapped in the pan, and the bird was nearly out of range, when I pulled the second trigger, and the bird fell

noisily to the ground. 'Bravo! M. B——,' said my friend, 'bravo! *Aujour d'hiu nou ferons mort toutes les frankolins.*' His droll gesticulations as he spoke, and his utter ignorance of French were to me so extremely diverting, that I never recal the scene without laughing."

With such anecdotes we advanced apace, and about ten minutes before sunset reached Slybe, the village at which we intended to bivouac for the night. Never in the whole course of my existence had I witnessed such wild and magnificent scenery. The approach to the village was along the narrow edge of a fearful precipice. In the valley beneath were herds of cattle, quietly grazing upon the rich and abundant pasturage; above, on the gradually sloping hills, flocks of goats and sheep were bleating for their young; before us lay a boundless expanse of sea, and on the extreme verge of this, rose, in perpendicular abruptness, out of the deep, clear waters, a lofty hill, on which was situated the delightful little village of Slybe. From the windows of the cottage

where we lodged, we could have dropped a stone upon the decks of any one of the little fishing-craft below, which were passing and repassing the whole night.

Soon after our arrival, our room was filled with inquisitive villagers, who came to smoke a pipe of friendship, and to see if anything could be got out of us. The old Sheik complained sadly of the taxation to which the villagers were subjected, and asked if we could not exert our interest with the Pasha of Aleppo on their behalf, to get it reduced. Brouchie promised to do so, and kept his promise, but with what result I cannot say. At length conversation began to flag, and we became very sleepy; but our visitors recovering, conversed among themselves. One very loquacious little Turk was inclined to attribute the misfortunes of the village to the want of a good Judge, or Cadi, at Latachia, and concluded every sentence he uttered with a prayer that Moustafa Cadi might come back again. This frequent repetition of the Cadi's name induced me to inquire what good deeds

the said Moustafa had done to merit such high eulogiums, and I had no sooner propounded the question than the whole of the assembled Turks begged their compatriot to tell me the story of the rich man and his brother, which, I afterwards found, is a standard illustration of the Cadi's love of equity. The general desire was, to my infinite horror, as I was longing for sleep, instantly acceded to; but as the story progressed, it grew so amusing, that I became reconciled to its narration, and have here preserved it for the reader:

"There lived at Slybe," said my informant, "not many years ago, a wealthy Turkish Effendi, who, dying, left two sons, his only children, to inherit conjointly the immense wealth he had acquired by inheritance, and by his own efforts in trade. His elder son was called Osman; and the younger Reschid. At a very early age, both had, in accordance with Oriental usage, taken unto themselves brides; and at the period when the old Effendi died, had been espoused for some four or five years. Seid

Moustafa Effendi was at this epoch Cadi of Latachia, and a more just or a better judge has seldom filled the seat of equity.

"Osman, the elder son, was a careful and even stingy man: Reschid loved dearly the pleasures of the world, and was rather a spend-thrift than otherwise. These were unfortunate dispositions in both; for had love of pleasure been the fault of Osman, he could have indulged it without detriment to his worldly affairs, having no family to support, and ample means at command; while Reschid was encumbered with a troop of provokingly-healthy children. In the East, none are so honoured as parents of extensive families, and none so much contemned as those who have none. The mortification of Osman, therefore, with all his riches, was very great, as he had no heir to whom he might bequeath his wealth, which, however, he continually sought to increase, and grew every day more thrifty, almost denying himself at last the common necessaries of life. Reschid had long since wasted his substance by gam-

bling and insane speculations, and a thin wife and half a dozen hungry children reminded him constantly of the excess and follies he had committed. Hunger is a remorseless enemy, and earnestly as Reschid laboured to put it off, a day of reckoning came, when he was reduced to the last extremity. He dared not seek aid from his brother, for it would have been fruitless; and Osman's contempt and irony would have entered like sharp steel into his soul.

"In this dilemma, Reschid's wife, remembering the natural gentleness of womankind, resolved on laying siege to Osman's wife; and so contrived as to meet her at the Turkish bath. Her success was even beyond her expectations; for not only did the sister-in-law afford immediate relief to her suffering relatives, but she had such great faith in the excellence and worth of her brother-in-law, as a disciple of the Prophet, that she earnestly solicited his prayers might be offered on her behalf, to the end that Allah would pity her condition, and grant her that

great object of her ambition—a son, in whose name and descent she might pride herself. Of course, Reschid interceded day and night with the Prophet, and such was the fervency of his prayers, that in the course of a year, great festivities were held at his brother Osman's house, to celebrate the birth of an heir, and the grateful and happy mother, remembering the prayers of Reschid, sent him a peace-offering in the shape of a lamb. It proved, however, anything but a peace-offering; for the niggardly Osman happening to get scent of this fact, and highly incensed at his wife's want of economy, went straight to Reschid's house, and demanded instant restitution of the present.

"Now Reschid had already dined and supped, as had his wife and his six hungry children, upon the very lamb in question, so that, beyond the bones and the skin, he had nothing to tender his angry brother; and in consequence, a very angry scuffle ensued, in which Osman came off second best. He marched off to complain to the Cadi, Seid Moustafa Effendi,

taking his brother with him; and away they went through the town, the fat, angry, rich Osman strutting on in front, panting with indignation, and swelling with rage, while the thin, poverty-stricken Reschid followed in his wake, ready to sink down with shame, and shrinking from his own shadow. They trudged along ankle-deep in the sand, and panting with heat and thirst, and had gone a good way towards the Cadi's, when, about the centre of the town, they ran against an unhappy muleteer, whose mule had stumbled, and fallen load and all into a very deep ditch. The muleteer implored assistance; but he might as well have asked a stone, as have spoken to Osman. With Reschid, however, it was different; and a child of misfortune himself, he hastened to the muleteer's assistance, and lent him a willing hand.

"'Now,' said the muleteer, 'you pull on the tail and I'll pull on you, and between us, we are sure to have the mule out.'

"Reschid obeyed, and pulling hard, soon went

flying across the road with the tail of the mule in his hand, leaving the carcase behind. The ungrateful muleteer instantly seized him by the throat, and threatening loudly, led him towards the Cadi's residence, assisted in his purpose by Osman. Reschid, with the horrid mule's tail dangling in his hand, began to feel extremely uncomfortable, and a dungeon or the bastinado seemed the best he had to hope for. Thinking over his unhappy fate, and tightly held by his two detainers, he entered the main street of Latachia, when they came upon a great concourse of people collected round two Jewish brokers, who were disputing about the value of a para. In the scuffle and jostling that ensued, they got mixed up with the mob, and Reschid was separated from the others; but instead of acting like a wise man, and going quietly home, he began to interfere between the two disputants, and endeavoured to settle their difference. The result was most unfortunate for him; for in striving to haul back one of the Jews, they both fell to the ground,

and Reschid's thumb entered the Jew's eye with such force, that it destroyed the sight. This accident drew upon him the ire of all the spectators, so that, in addition to his brother and the muleteer, poor Reschid had now to contend with a host of new enemies. His case really seemed desperate, and resolving to die at once, rather than be subjected to the torture of a cruel and lingering death, Reschid determined to throw himself off the first minaret he could reach, and, by this means, either gain in safety the other side of the city walls, or perish in the attempt.

"As they drew nigh the justice-hall, the call to prayer resounded from the lofty minaret of a neighbouring mosque, and all devout Moslems who were passing, immediately entered its court. Among the number were Osman and the muleteer, and Reschid could not be prevented from following, though angry Jews awaited his return outside. Reschid walked up the aisle of the mosque, repeating aloud verses from the Koran, till he arrived at the corridor leading

to the minaret, when he mounted the steps, and gained the pinnacle above. There he balanced himself for a moment betwixt earth and heaven, and then, muttering a stifled prayer for the welfare of his family, made one mighty spring towards the other side of the walls, overwhelming all who beheld him with horror and consternation.

"The wall was of great height, and a fine old tree, which threw a pleasant shade around, grew close by, under which two old Dervishes who had come from Mecca, after a repast of dried fruits and bread, and a tranquil pipe, were calmly reposing, wrapped in deep slumber. But a whirring noise, as of something heavy coming through the air, followed by a crash upon the earth, and a loud groan, woke up one of the Dervishes, when he found that his comrade would never wake again. In fact, he had been killed by Reschid, who had fallen on the Dervish's head, and by the weight of his body and his iron-heeled boots, caused instant death.

"This new disaster became known before Reschid had time to decamp, and he was duly seized and pinioned, and borne away, amidst a tempest of imprecations, to the judgment-hall of Seid Moustafa Effendi. The Cadi was horrified to see such a procession, and naturally imagined Reschid to be one of the most hardened villains upon earth. Order being restored, he heard each complainant separately, taking in turn Reschid's brother Osman, then the muleteer, next the Jew, and finally the Dervish; and having heard all, he sat leisurely stroking his beard for a few minutes, and then proceeded to sum up and pass sentence, as follows:

"'Osman has certainly a right to claim the value of the lamb, and I decree that he be paid by Reschid, but upon condition that he deliver over to Reschid his son and heir, as it is evident that the child was born in answer to Reschid's prayers, offered by him to Allah and his Prophet. The muleteer asked that assist-ance, the granting of which has caused him

misfortune, and I therefore decree that the mule be handed over to Reschid, and that he be at the expense of its support till such time as the tail shall have grown again in its natural place. The Jew has a very strong case, but, according to the laws of the Koran, every Jew and Infidel must suffer twofold what a true believer has to undergo. If therefore the Jew consents to his remaining eye being put out, I shall insist on Reschid losing one of his eyes. As for the holy Dervish, who complains of the death of his worthy friend, the only means of satisfaction that I can suggest is, that Reschid be made to lie down on the very spot where he caused the death of the virtuous Dervish, and that the complainant do ascend the minaret, and throw himself off so as to fall upon Reschid, which, I think, is giving ample satisfaction for the mishap that has occurred.'

"Such was the Cadi's decision. Of course, none wished to benefit by his decrees, but every complainant had to pay the Court-dues—a considerable sum, which the Cadi most generously

handed over to Reschid, telling him to go home, and strive to be a wiser, as well as a better man."

Such was the story I heard in the little cottage at Slybe, and this was why Seid Moustafa Effendi was so celebrated as an upright judge.

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